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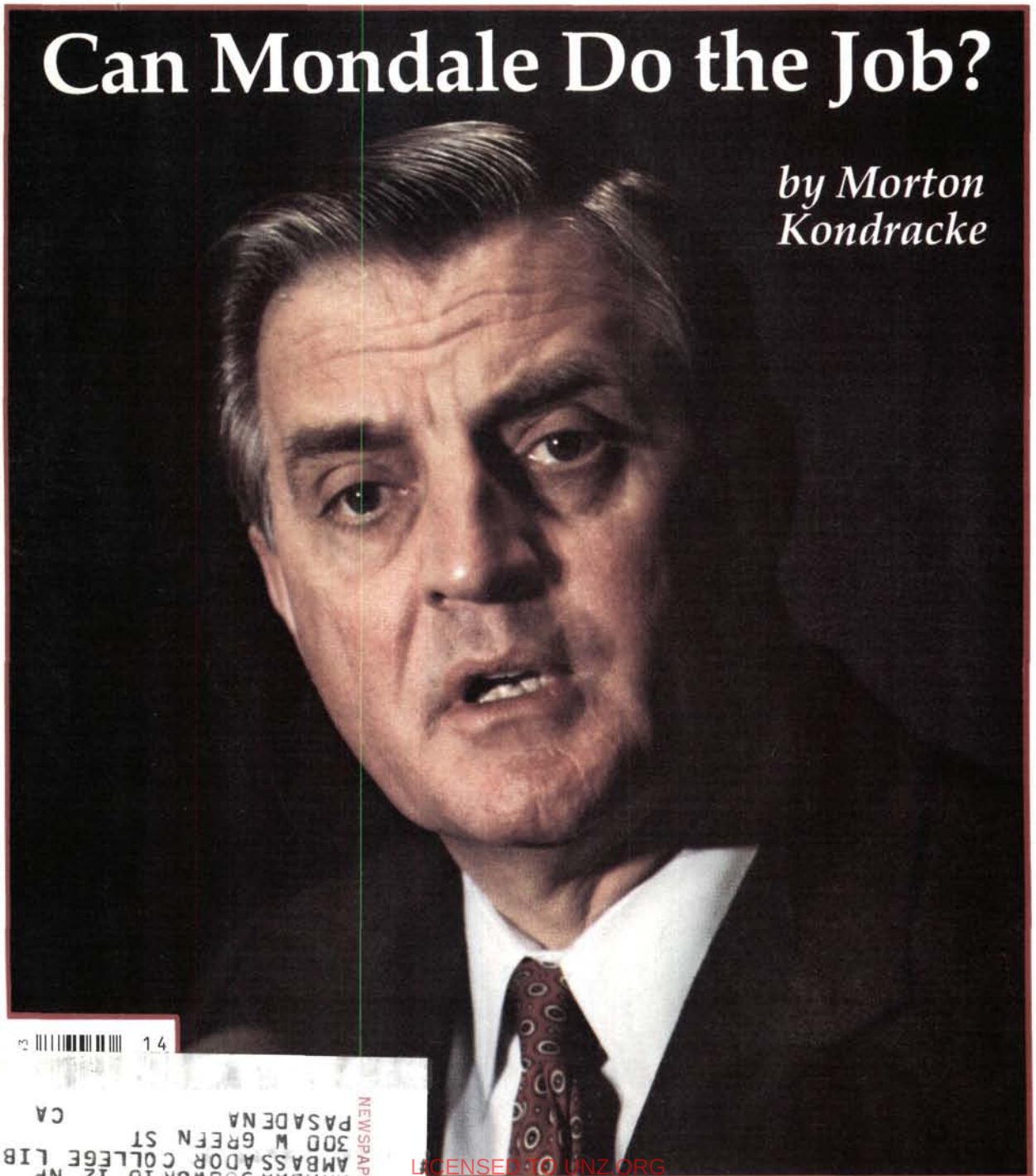
THE NEW REPUBLIC

Can Mondale Do the Job?

by Morton Kondracke



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NEWSPAPER

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CORRESPONDENCE

BUSING

To the editors:
George V. Higgins's "Boston's Busing Disaster" is a well-written piece whose analysis is flawed at every point (TNR, February 28). As such it is only useful as an example of mainstream journalistic attitudes toward desegregation.

First, almost no evidence is given to support the central assumption of the article, that "busing didn't work" in Boston. We are told that the policy failed because declining white enrollments have caused the schools to be more segregated than ever. Assuming that the uncited data on which this idea is based is correct, there is no reason to assume that "busing" caused the decline. Enrollments in urban schools throughout Massachusetts have dropped sharply, even in places where kids rode buses to all-white schools. One might argue that the Garrity order accelerated this trend in Boston, but this is an issue of considerable debate, a fact not mentioned by Higgins.

Instead, he blames Judge Garrity and his planners, who based their desegregation plan on a geographical breakdown of the city that pitted the most "fractious" neighborhoods against one another. This is nonsense. There was no way to integrate the Boston school system without either transporting blacks to high schools in South Boston, Hyde Park, and Charlestown or tearing these schools down.

The heart of Higgins's argument is the "busing didn't work because it only involved the poor" thesis, repeated ad nauseum by numerous Boston-based journalists over the past decade. Usually the argument is coupled with attacks on various liberal planners, "social engineers" who fail to understand the city's ethnic white neighborhoods. Higgins's version is decidedly more anti-working class—he suggests, for example, that those affected by desegregation were ignorant of the provisions of the 1965 Racial Imbalance Law and had little interest in the city's educational system—but the basic idea is the same.

The problem, of course, is that the only way to have resolved the dilemma would have been to issue a desegregation order that affected private and suburban schools. Not only would such a decree have been without constitutional precedent, it would have made Garrity even more unpopular and the organized resistance to desegregation even greater. The sad fact is that there is no easy path to integrated education: tough white kids are going to have to sit next to tough black kids and everyone will have to ride buses. If you think it's not worth the trouble, you may be right, Mr. Higgins, but don't blame Judge Garrity.

JEFF SINGLETON
Somerville, Massachusetts

To the editors:
Your February 28 cover, "Why Busing Didn't Work," differs considerably from George V. Higgins's article "Boston's Busing Disaster," which reports that busing eroded Boston's public education, and increased segregation. The article asserts that busing fails, causes white flight, and ruins quality teaching. As a 1978 graduate of the only formerly all-black high school in a city where busing has been effective, I argue against the general assumptions of both the cover and Higgins's article.

Since busing began in 1971, faculty, staff, and students of West Charlotte (N.C.) High School have worked hard to make integration successful. In 1974 the staff began several programs to entice students, including an open school component, a versatile performing arts department, "No-Slack" and "Hang-On" programs for would-be drop-outs, and a fashion school. By providing alternatives for both highly motivated students and those with little motivation, these programs enhanced the existing college-preparatory and vocational curricula. Similar programs were developed throughout the Charlotte-Mecklenburg system to enhance the quality of public instruction and to smooth over rough spots in the busing plan.

When federal Judge James B. McMillian ruled in 1969 in *Swann* v. *The Board of Education* that busing should be used to achieve racial integration of public schools, there was some protest of "No Forced Busing!" Yet there was no sense that parents were "walloped," as Higgins writes, nor any great measure of white flight to private schools and surrounding counties. Rather, most Charlotteans kept their children in the public school system and worked with changes in school assignments as the busing plan developed. Evidently from the eleven-year success of integration in Charlotte, the plan effected by McMillian and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools was neither as clumsy nor as haphazard as the one put forward by Boston's Judge Arthur Garrity.

Those of us who attended integrated Southern schools, who rode buses, who studied and played with blacks and whites, are better off for our experiences. We know that prejudice cannot change unless it is confronted. Busing helps in that process of learning and understanding.

C.L.R. SWEARNGAN JR.
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

THE BOURNE IDENTITY

To the editors:
Randolph Bourne certainly deserves the reconsideration that Henry Fairlie has given him ("A Radical and a Patriot," TNR, February 28). Bourne, whose sense of purpose had not yet hardened into a specific vocation, was a perceptive social critic, an eloquent protester against war sentiment, and an inspiring man of conscience who did bear witness to his principles. If, however, we should confront Bourne both as legend and as man, as Mr. Fairlie asserts, then we should also engage Bourne as the influential members of his generation did—as friend and correspondent.

To prognosticate about how Bourne would have maintained his aesthetic and political principles through the turmoil of the '20s and '30s is a useless, ahistorical exercise. In fact, one of the reasons Bourne maintained his luster in the eyes of Van Wyck Brooks and other critics of our culture is that the pre-World War I forces that Bourne held in dynamic tension did not have to be put to the test of the following two decades.

Bourne resembles the true student radical of the '60s, whom Mr. Fairlie too easily denegrates. He sought seriousness among his fellow students at Columbia and demanded a socially constructive education of the university. "My education," he asserted in one of

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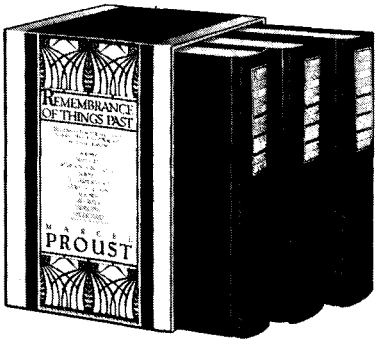

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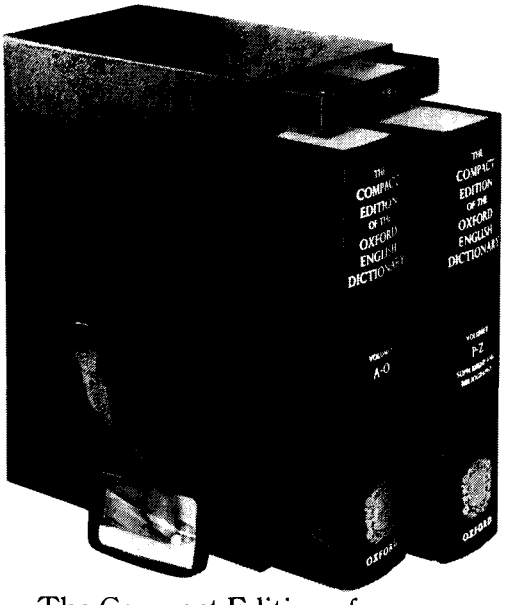

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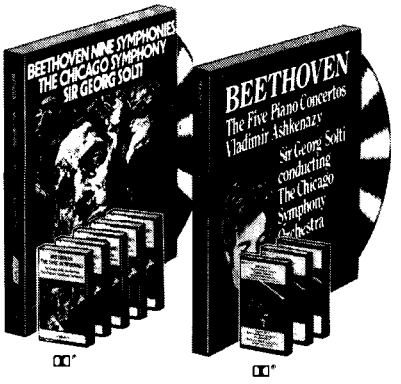
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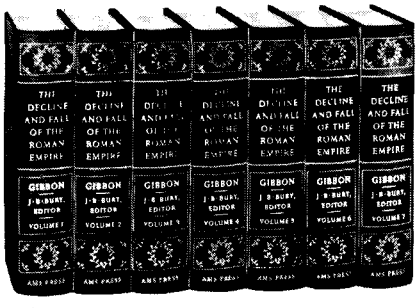

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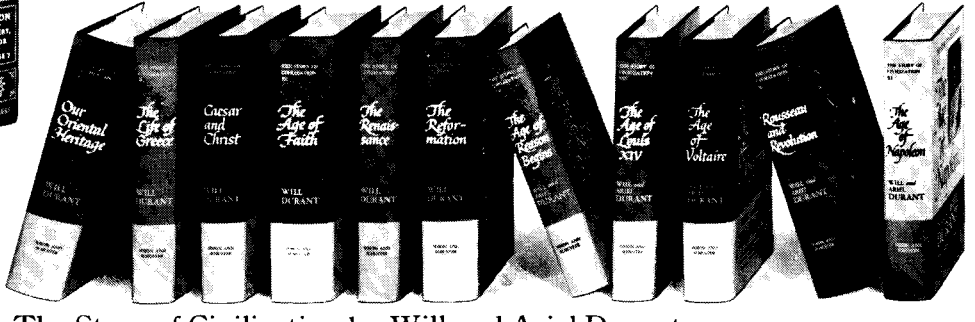

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

his earliest letters, "has come from talk and argument here, with brilliant, interested young people."

Bourne's letters reinforce his identification with an intellectual class that took upon itself the responsibility of socially constructive action, while, at the same time, the correspondence shows the turmoil that true conviction brings. There is a sense of anticipation in Bourne's writing, as though he and his colleagues were about to emerge from an intellectual apprenticeship into a position of cultural power: "There is so much to be done," he lamented, "so much to be said, while I don't seem quite able to make the connections, close the switch that will set the current flowing."

Bourne bore witness not only through his writings but also through his physical presence. He grappled with his physical deformities, the boundaries of his intellect, and the level to which an individual, exercising his conscience, could transform principle into social action. Among his friends the legend was passed that Bourne had died on the day the first troop ship returned soldiers from the Great War to the United States. The sense of potential, the well-articulated yet unresolved dilemma of how to carry youthful principle into the world of action perpetuated the Bourne legend among his friends.

ERIC J. SANDEEN
University of Wyoming
Laramie, Wyoming

To the editors:
Henry Fairlie's reconsideration of Randolph Bourne was a welcome contribution to THE NEW REPUBLIC. Bourne would have appreciated the rich irony of the magazine that fired him because it could not tolerate dissent celebrating the significance of his life sixty-five years after his death. When Bourne died in 1918, THE NEW REPUBLIC's editors wrote anonymously that the "sharp corners" of his personality needed "rounding." They could not forgive someone who had seen so clearly through their myopic faith in efficiency and discipline as the answers to America's problems.

But Fairlie is wrong that Bourne never considered himself a Socialist. "I was delighted to find," Bourne wrote to a friend in 1913, "that my real faith didn't waver an instant before the deluge; it only served to bring out more clearly . . . the contrast between my Socialism and the old ideals and make me want to crush the latter all the more completely."

EDWARD ABRAHAMS
Washington, D.C.

Henry Fairlie replies:
It is interesting that both these letters draw on what Bourne said in his correspondence and conversation. But these should be used only with care. Given his handicaps, "talk and argument" were to him necessary and vivid forms of recreation, as well as an intellectual exercise. His personal magnetism owed a lot to his conversational enthusiam; I prefer to rely on the disciplined writing he did for publication.

Mr. Sandeen may claim him as a true student radical of the '60s if he likes, but it is a gross plundering of Bourne's writing. Similarly, more to the point than claiming him as a Socialist, as Mr. Abrahams does, is a suggestion made to me by Irving Howe in a personal letter: that I may "at the end" have "let Bourne off too lightly," because a mere "cultural" or "literary" radicalism is in too much danger of being a mere stance, and that if Bourne had lived, he would, if he had followed his position through, have had to become a more truly "political" Socialist than he gave evidence of in his writing.

THE N.C.A.A. AND RACISM

To the editors:
Black leaders—primarily presidents of black colleges—may be misguided in charging the National Collegiate Athletic Association with racism for its recent adoption of Proposal 48 (not "proposition"). But they are correct in saying the new rule will disproportionately hurt blacks, something you failed to point out in your February 28 "Notebook."

The issue is not the uplifting of academic standards. The requirement of minimum academic competency is long overdue in the face of all-too-familiar horror stories of exploited athletes—black and white—who graduate from college unable to read or write.

But the requirement of a minimum score of 700 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, or 15 on the American College Testing examination, is the wrong way to go about it. Even George Hanford, president of the College Board, which administers the S.A.T., has joined the opposition to the cutoff because of its effect on minorities.

Last year blacks averaged a combined score of 707 on the verbal and mathematics sections of the S.A.T., compared to whites who achieved an average of 927 on the test. The test may or may not be racially biased. What is known, however, is that it is not a perfect predictor of achievement in college. Indeed, most colleges do not require a specific score as a standard for admission. More important, what is also known is that those from wealthier backgrounds consistently score better than those from poorer backgrounds.

Many students whose parents cannot afford a college education depend on athletic scholarships as their only ticket to a college education. In a city like Atlanta, where 92 percent of the students are black and the average S.A.T. score last year fell below 700 to 673, Proposal 48 could destroy many youths' only chance for a college education.

JANE HANSEN
Atlanta, Georgia

PAPER PROFITS

To the editors:
I have been sent a copy of Patrick Brogan's article entitled "Citizen Murdoch," (TNR, October 11, 1982). Mr. Brogan states on page 23, "Using the influence conferred by owning newspapers to further their business interests is an old game for proprietors: the eminently respectable Thomsons were offered a cut of North Sea oil because they owned *The Times*, and made billions." As the chief executive of the Thomson business responsible for negotiating the company's investment in North Sea oil, I would be interested to know on what basis of fact the writer makes that statement. It is totally untrue and inaccurate.

G. C. BRUNTON
President
International Thomson Organization Ltd.
London, England

The editors reply:
Patrick Brogan used his own interviews and a book by Eric Jacobs entitled *Stop Press* as his sources for the statement about Thomson and North Sea oil.

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FROM WASHINGTON

ANOTHER DOOMED CRUSADE

President Reagan has embarked on an anticrime crusade that fits right into his political fundamentalism. Abroad it's Communism, the "focus of evil in the modern world," he told the evangelicals the other day in Orlando, Florida; at home it's softness on crime and neglect of law'n'order. In Europe our NATO allies whisper they wish Reagan would speak out about new nuclear negotiating initiatives; at home experts wish he would break his silence on gun control. It might keep down the appalling murder rate.

A violent crime occurs in the United States every 24 seconds. In a recent year there were 55 handgun murders in all of the British Isles; 52 in Canada; and 10,728 in the United States! What accounts for the ghastly difference? For one thing, you can buy handguns nearly everywhere in America—in hardware stores, for example. There are 160,000 dealers or pawnbrokers. Just about anybody can become a dealer simply by paying a $10 fee. John W. Hinckley Jr., got his gun readily enough. Its parts were imported because Congress voted to ban fully assembled guns, but left the business of putting the lethal things together to native industry. Hinckley bought a Saturday Night Special and nearly killed a President. Eight of 39 Presidents were victims of assassination attempts; four were killed.

President Reagan's political fundamentalism fits into the niche between law'n'order and the right to bear arms. "Ronald Reagan is the most pro-gun President in my lifetime," says John Snyder, enthusiastically. Snyder is chief lobbyist for the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, companion of the militant National Rifle Association. The new Reagan crusade is a "tremendous package" says Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Strom Thurmond. Indeed, many of the proposals could be valuable. I do not think the President is a hypocrite. I think he believes in his crime crusade, just as he believes all those things about Communists being an "evil empire" in Europe and a center of disruption in Central America. What is illuminating is to see how the rhetoric and the policy fit together. Reagan isn't the first. Richard Nixon used law'n'order in 1968, when he denounced Supreme Court decisions for being soft on crime. Governor Rockefeller objected: "It is not straight talk to issue resounding statements on crime control which wholly omit the slightest mention of guns."

In his Orlando speech, Reagan all but ignored recommendations made by a task force set up by Attorney General William French Smith. The task force urged stronger control of firearms, discussed the relationship between poverty and crime, and advised that more cops be put on the streets and conditions be improved in jails. Reagan flatly stated that "deprivation and want don't necessarily increase crime." Not true. (He so often gets his facts wrong.) The Federal Bureau of Prisons reported in 1975, for example, that prison population rises with poverty: research by the Joint Economic Committee estimated that a 1 percent increase in unemployment is accompanied by an increase in prison admissions of about 4 percent.

I have seen crime commissions in this city come and go: Wickersham, 1931; Katzenbach, 1967; Kerner, 1968; Milton Eisenhower, 1969; Advisory Committee on Crime, 1981. Crime in America is bad, but the thing that really frightens me is the veto power that one special interest group, the National Rifle Association, has over Congress. Everybody knows democracy is sick when polls for fifty years show the public wants tough gun control and can't get it. Sociologist Kenneth Clark, a member of the Kerner Commission, said: "It is a kind of Alice in Wonderland with the same motion picture shown over and over again, the same analysis, the same recommendations—and the same inaction . . . . A suitable agenda for action has been

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
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REVEREND REAGAN

"The window of vulnerability" doesn't command the nation's undivided attention anymore, but when Ronald Reagan mentions "the phenomenology of evil," you sit up and listen. The President broached this, and other matters of great profundity, in his speech (more properly, his sermon) to the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando. The speech deserves study. To date we have had no more comprehensive communication of the President's picture of American society, or of the moral ambitions he has for it. We have also had no more intellectual effort from this unintellectual (and uneffortful) President; he cited the Founding Fathers, Tocqueville, C.S. Lewis, Whittaker Chambers, Lenin, and, of course, the Bible. A major text, in short, of this conservative hour.

According to Ronald Reagan, history is reaching a climax. He portrayed his country as embattled, set upon by enemies from without and within, fighting for nothing less than its reason for being. The enemy without is Communism, which the President described as "the focus of evil in the modern world"; the speech left friends and foes around the world with the impression that the President of the United States was contemplating holy war. The enemy within is "modern-day secularism." With his implication that the two are working toward a single end, which is the weakening of America, Mr. Reagan insulted multitudes.

The President's larger point was that political struggles are spiritual struggles. The consequences of this point are many. The first is to raise the emotional pitch of politics in general. The President was not affable in the pulpit; he was apocalyptic. He thrilled his audience with the tale of a man who said that "I would rather see my little girls die now, still believing in God, than have them grow up under Communism and one day die no longer believing in God," as if this, in the area of foreign policy, is the question at issue. (That man had little faith in faith.) The West, the President warned, is in "spiritual crisis," which is graven and more grandiose than Jimmy Carter's "malaise." It is an emergency, in short, which requires not a politics of reason but a politics of the rod.

The second consequence of the President's spiritualization of politics is a staggering simplification of it. The slander of secularism—which, Mr. Reagan observed, on the authority of Whittaker Chambers, "collaborates in Communism's attempt to make man stand alone without God"—is bad enough. But there is more. The speech, in fact, is an orgy of cheap shots. Item: those who are in favor of the right to abortion must take responsibility for "infanticide and mercy killing," because they are all the result of the same "decline in respect for human life." Item: those who oppose the "squeal rule" necessarily believe that "something so sacred [as sex] can be looked upon as a purely physical thing with no potential for emotional and psychological harm." Item: those who support a mutual and verifiable nuclear freeze are not only politically but spiritually wrong, because they have yielded to "the temptation of pride—the temptation to blithely declare yourselves above it all and label both sides equally at fault."

Nowhere in the President's homily was there the hint of an understanding that all these positions originate not in sin, but in something much harder to fight—another point of view. This is not surprising, because Mr. Reagan's thesis was precisely that policy decisions must have religious reasons. "Is all of the Judeo-Christian tradition wrong?" he asked about the parents' right to know. Well, nobody said it was; the confidentiality of birth control counseling does not have a metaphysical basis. What has been offered on its behalf is a social consideration, not a spiritual consideration. But no social consideration has been offered for the "squeal rule," and society will pay dearly, with a new population of unwanted and unloved children, if the spiritual consideration has sway.

By what authority does this man claim to administer the

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Judeo-Christian tradition? We elected a President, not a priest. It is not arrogance, however, that is responsible for Mr. Reagan's sacerdotal conception of his role. That conception is based, rather, in a specific construction of the American political system. "When our Founding Fathers passed the First Amendment," the President explained, "they sought to protect churches from government interference. They never meant to construct a wall of hostility between government and the concept of religious belief itself." And he went on: "The evidence of this permeates our history and our government. The Declaration of Independence mentions the Supreme Being no less than four times. 'In God We Trust' is engraved on our coinage. The Supreme Court opens its proceedings with a religious invocation. And the Members of Congress open their meetings with a prayer."

This is very poor history. The author of the Declaration of Independence will offer small succor to a religious view of the Republic; the Supreme Being to whom Jefferson refers is a Deist deity, who made the world and left it to its devices. There is no more rationalist document of our early years, and no more strenuous plea for the strict separation of church and state, than Jefferson's draft for a constitution of Virginia, which was also written in 1776. (The President cited Tom Paine, too, which is exactly the opposite of the Devil quoting Scripture.)

The President was correct that "the Founding Fathers" did not design "a wall of hostility" between religion and politics. The spirit of the First Amendment is not anticlerical; although the differences in religious doctrine among the founders were considerable, almost none of them harbored a hostility to religion. But they designed a wall anyway. Perhaps the first to describe the nature of this wall was Tocqueville, an early sociologist of spiritual forms, whom the President misappropriated for his purposes. Tocqueville's problem was "to discover how [religions] can most easily preserve their power in the democratic centuries which lie before us." They can do so, he concluded, by "confining themselves to their proper sphere," which is not the sphere of politics. Tocqueville was struck not by the grandeur of religion in America, as Mr. Reagan claimed, but by the wisdom of American priests who "proclaim themselves in general terms in favor of civil liberties without excepting even those who do not admit religious freedom; [and] none of them lend their support to any particular political system." Clearly things have changed. Priests now extend their ecclesiastical authority to affairs of policy, and the President extends his executive authority to affairs of the soul. "I think the items we have discussed here today," the President preached, referring to the religious analysis of abortion, school prayer, and parental notification, "must be a key part of the nation's political agenda." With these words he has set himself against the American political tradition.

"Neutrality" is how the Supreme Court has interpreted the First Amendment's attitude to religion; noting that "we are a religious people," the Court judged in 1963, that religion must nevertheless let government alone, so that "a majority [could not] use the machinery of State to practice its beliefs." Which is exactly what the President was recommending.

Social policy must be made for social purposes and moral purposes, and these are not the same as religious purposes. The old distinction between morality and religion, however, was lost on Mr. Reagan. It is lost on the fundamentalist community, too. The expulsion of religion from politics is not an expulsion of morality from politics. Philosophers from Judah Halevi to Kierkegaard have recognized that religion is something more specific and exclusive than morality, whose principles are universal. These principles, which are to be found in religion as well, survive the secularization of politics. Indeed, it is in their name—in the name of rights, which is the universal idea par excellence—that politics was secularized. It was, in other words, for the sake of democracy that politics was robbed of revelation. When revelation was surrendered, however, virtue was not. That is why God-fearing men were willing to relieve their polity of God. They knew that much would be gained and little would be lost. The separation of church and state in America was the secular creation of religious people.

PRESIDENT REAGAN profoundly misunderstands the nature of secularism. He called secularism a "value system that is radically different from that of most Americans." Most Americans, he continued, believe in "families, churches, neighborhoods, communities—the institutions that foster and nourish values like concern for others and respect for the rule of law under God." But the rule of law need not be under God, as long as it is over man. Who are the secularists who are not committed to these institutions and values? Are the unchurched on the darkling American plain really against families and communities? There are precincts of sanctity in secular lives, too. The President's rhetoric is deeply divisive. The moral and sociological reality of this country refutes his tidy and tendentious distinctions. Secularism is just as committed to what he called "the tried and time-tested values upon which our very civilization is based" as religion. Secularism simply has different reasons for its commitments. In a democracy, however, reasons cannot be ruled.

The President also misunderstands the profoundly secular character of democracy. This misunderstanding appears in the most ironic passage of his sermon. His argument for a religious conception of American citizenship ended with this evidence: "One recent survey by a Washington-based research council concluded that Americans were far more religious than the people of other nations; 95 percent of those surveyed expressed a belief in God and a huge majority believed the Ten Commandments had real meaning in their lives. And another study has found that an overwhelming majority of Americans disapprove of adultery, teenage sex, pornography, abortion, and hard drugs." Nothing could be more in the spirit of democracy and less in the spirit of religion than these remarks. Truth is indifferent to numbers. Politics is not. Priests do not

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take polls. Presidents do. Only in a political system in which legitimacy comes not from above but from below can public opinion become a form of bearing religious witness.

Obviously an overwhelming majority of Americans disapprove of adultery, teenage sex, pornography, and hard drugs. The study cited by the President proves only that the moral health of the public has not been impaired by the secularization of politics. Those who differ with the President in the matter of religion and politics do not do so because they approve of certain patterns of personal behavior, but because they disapprove of the idea that patterns of personal behavior require government approval.

The influence of religion upon the public life cannot be denied. In many instances it is salutary. The President does not want to wish to divest the United States of this influence. He is not the first. The Anti-Federalists protested bitterly against the remorseless rationalism of the Constitution; the maintenance of republican institutions, they said, requires the persistence of religion. This was exactly the conclusion to which Tocqueville came, too; but religion in America, he wrote, bore not upon laws, but upon mores, where its function was to check the excesses of individualism and materialism. Mr. Reagan, it is plain, cannot have enough individualism or materialism. Still, he insists that religion is an instrument of improvement. It will not, however, improve politics.

The President should cease these celestial navigations. There is business on earth. He is not in the White House to save our souls, but to protect our bodies; not to do God's will, but the people's. Anyway, God will forgive—that, said Heine, is his profession.

Third World Thud

The leaders of 101 countries calling themselves nonaligned have departed New Delhi, from which, presumably to impress her guests, Mrs. Gandhi had driven away all beggars, snake charmers, and monkey tamers. Everything is back to normal on India's streets, and in world politics, too. These days normalcy in politics means having each assembly of extremists declared a victory for moderation. The line was laid down by an unidentified "moderate" foreign minister. The hardliners, he said, "got their way on the rhetoric," but the moderates "won hands down where the real world is concerned."

The truth, is, however, that when sovereignties on the order of the Seychelles and Bangladesh gather, there isn't much to care about aside from the rhetoric. Here is what they agreed on, real world or not: that Israel (or "the Israeli entity," as it was called) be arraigned before an international war crimes tribunal; that the loans of rich countries be converted into grants; that the international financial system be overhauled, giving the third world a bigger say in its operations. The United States was attacked explicitly in eleven conference resolutions, the Soviet Union in none. On those issues that the 101 were able to reach some consensus, they have no power. On those issues involving conflicts among the 101, they could not agree. Iraq and Iran, for example, were represented in New Delhi, and their extended bloodletting was talked about some, but the nonaligned couldn't even arrive at a formula by which the two countries might negotiate. The summit did address the oppression of the people of Diego Garcia, half the size of Isle of Wight ("the Palestinians of the Indian Ocean," according to one delegate). There was, of course, no discussion—at least no official discussion—of the massacre in Assam. A sad spectacle, and a costly one, too.

Notebook

☐ FIFTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Franklin Roosevelt will at least aim at a sort of justice different from that to which Hoover was inspired by his abject respect for big business. Public-utility magnates will not overawe him. Though the son of a railroad vice-president and director of corporations, and though himself once a corporation lawyer, he has still some of the democratic idealism of the days when Dutch merchants were rebels, and he has made some effort to see democratic problems from the point of view of changed conditions. He is at least superficially in touch with the enlightened thought of his time: there is a faint flavor of Charles A. Beard about him at moments. He understands that the American frontier has been exhausted and that economic crises can never again be relieved by sending the unemployed West." ("The Hudson River Progressive" by Edmund Wilson, April 5, 1933.)

A twenty-five year retrospective.

The M*A*S*H Era

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO "M*A*S*H" went off the air, throwing a vacuum into an already then-turbulent mood. I was there, wailing and gnashing my *TV Guide* along with a 64 percent share of the American people; and in Washington I witnessed the frenzy that occurred in the streets of every major American city that night as a nation of M*A*S*H addicts smashed windows and overturned cars in search of an answer to the question, *Why? . . . Why* did CBS cancel the series just when its sagging ratings seemed set for an upturn? And *what* would the burgeoning elite group of M*A*S*H fans do with enough collective TV-show love to power an entire Thursday night lineup?

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Even then it was obvious, as I muttered to myself at the time, "If a man could only *harness* this viewing energy, he could change the way this country looks at itself. . . ."

Such a man was in the wings, wearing baggy green fatigues.

In 1986, by which time the first three M*A*S*H sequels had failed ("Trapper John M.D.," " After M*A*S*H," and "Storefront M*A*S*H"), it looked as if the cynics and professional doubters were right: the M*A*S*H era (some would have called it a movement, even then at its apparent nadir) was over. Half a nation of M*A*S*Heads (as a pundit was to dub us years later) fell into despair—the sweet sadness of that final episode, the messages of love, peace, and sharing that continually emerged during the series, all now seemingly never to see the dawn of a day that would witness a worthy sequel—and the potential snowball that was our emotion melted slowly and lonesomely on the vast scorching desert of Network indifference and *nihil obstatism*.

THAT, ANYWAY, was the way Alan Alda, host of the first M*A*S*H-related show of any type to succeed ("Only Alda," a talk show not to be confused with "Alan Alda in Crabapple Cove," a one-hour dramatic special in which Alda played the Hawkeye character and seven other roles, or "Alda on Alda," an early talk show that failed because of belligerent Network scheduling), put it in his eloquent 1985 videography, " Me."

"The problem," he said, "was that we—and I say 'we' because the M*A*S*H family always considered itself part of, part of a—a *family*, a family that transcended 'just' the M*A*S*H cast—because the thing is, is you don't walk away from an experience like that without carrying away a sense of kinship—if you *do*, I suggest you see your local vet because you've got something in your guts besides a heart because you're not *human*—was that *(applause)* . . . ."

(A pause; Mr. Alda rests his chin on his index finger and frowns) "I've grown very, very reflective about this. I guess the best way to put it is this. The show was about people—about people . . . *caring* about other people—and people could care about that. Not this network jiggle and giggle garbage, but . . . hmmmm. 'People caring about people caring about people.' That's what it was. Not the awards. Not the recognition. But the simple act of caring, the soul, the feeling."

(He shrugs) "That's what's missing from the sequels. The characters haven't been allowed to grow, so they've—they've . . . *they've stopped growing (applause)* . . . I guess what's *needed* is the kind of fresh, vibrant young comedy talent that we were when we started. Your Larry Gelbarts. Your Gene Reynoldses. Your me's. People you don't find every day.

"And I guess, in very many complex fundamental ways, that's what's missing from our political system in this country. Too little new talent. Too many old ideas. You tell me: why do people still want to throw *bombs* at each other? Didn't Korea teach us that that doesn't work? You know what Hawkeye would do? He would have them all over for a drink *(laughter, applause)*. He'd prescribe a small dose of *humanity* (not too much! that would kill them), and he'd say—just like he did when he broke in on the peace talks—'Hey, let's just *stop* this craziness.' But hey, maybe if we blow each other up, we won't argue any more. If *that* makes sense to you, I suggest you stick your head back in the ground where the *light* isn't so bright." *(long applause)*

One year later—the year that saw the first of a long string of successful M*A*S*H sequels that would dominate American (and world) television for the next two decades—Mr. Alda was a freshman Senator from California. On his election night, significantly, the first of these shows, for the first time, cracked the Top Twenty ratings barrier for that week.

Below is a chronological listing of the postelection activities of the M*A*S*H bunch:

Potter's Way (1986-1990): Harry Morgan stars in this hour-long dramatic comedy featuring Colonel Sherman Potter as he tries to adjust to postwar life as a country doctor in Missouri. In the series' pilot, an accidental shot of truth serum puts him on the wrong side of his wife (Martha Rae).

*No M*A*S* (1987-1991): The time: 1968. The place: the Democratic National Convention in Chicago. A group of old M*A*S*H regulars, in town for a reunion, get arrested through a comical case of mass mistaken identity. Originally leery of their long-haired jailmates, they come to learn that this war, too, is wrong. Led by Trapper John (Wayne Rogers), and driven crazy by a "mod" Frank Burns (Larry Linville), the group rides a day-glo bus around the country, living, loving, and patching up antiwar protesters on college campuses.

(Alan Alda re-elected to the Senate, 1992.)

Margaret (1993-2000): Margaret Houlihan (Loretta Swit), divorced for a second time, gives up nursing, goes to law school, and seeks a brand new life as the beautiful lady D.A. of glamorous San Francisco. Trouble begins when her ex-husband turns up as the crooked public defender. Trying to cope with a fresh divorce and an even fresher male building super, Margaret specializes in prosecuting criminals who hurt kids. In the pilot she throws out the book and goes undercover to find the punk that the Networks hired to rub out her friend, an advocate for better children's programming. (Co-starring Mr. T. as "The Paralegal.")

(Alan Alda runs for President; he and running-mate Edward Asner capture 64 percent of the popular vote. Citing a mandate from "people who care about people

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who care about people"—the theme of his candidacy—the President-elect calls for an immediate verifiable worldwide mutual freeze on Meanness, and begins implementation of his grand "new view of America," the Neo Deal, by announcing the creation of a new Cabinet-level agency, the Department of Caring, naming former acting colleague Carol Burnett as its host. 1996.)

*The M*A*S*H Tomatoes* (1997-): The M*A*S*H nurses hook up at a convention in Atlantic City and find that they're bored with their husbands and jobs. A rich gambler bets them they can't truck a load of penicillin to an orphanage full of kids in a Mexican border town, and they're off. Along the way they meet up with The Littlest Brain, a pint-sized whiz kid who's got a big plan to help the girls get over their biggest obstacle: Boss Polliwogg, the diminutive sheriff of a small Texas town, who for reasons of his own doesn't want the Tomatoes to make it alive. (With Jerve Villechaize as the Boss.)

*Monster M*A*S*H* (1997-2005): Radar O'Reilly (Gary Burghoff) buys an Iowa farm that is haunted.

(Alan Alda elected President for a second term, 2000. The first National Instant Video Amend-The-Constitution Referendum, repealing the 22nd Amendment, paves the way for a third term, 2001. The F.C.C. dissolves the three major commercial networks, 2002).

I Dream of Klinger (2001-2008): Max Klinger (Jamie Farr) dons his dresses one more time to go undercover for Uncle Sam as a harem girl in the glistening palace pleasure-pens of Baghdad. Affmab, the evil court magician, detects Klinger's scheme and turns him into a Genie. At the same instant in faraway Boston, stuffier-than-ever Charles Emerson Winchester (David Ogden Stiers) is having trouble locating an important file and idly says, "I wish Klinger were here," thus making him his Genie for life. It turns out to be a wish he wishes he never made. (With Sir Charles Nelson Reilly as Genie Mentor).

(Alan Alda elected to a third term, 2004. In 2006, the world's leaders, shepherded together by President Alda at Yuksta in the California desert, sign a pact, The Agreeing Agreement, in which they agree to unilaterally stop not liking each other. The agreement is signed in conjunction with the 35th anniversary of the airing of the first M*A*S*H episode. In 2008, saying that he is worried that his Presidency "may go stale," President Alda announces that he will not run for a fourth term.)

ALEX HEARD

Alex Heard is a reporter for *Education Week*.

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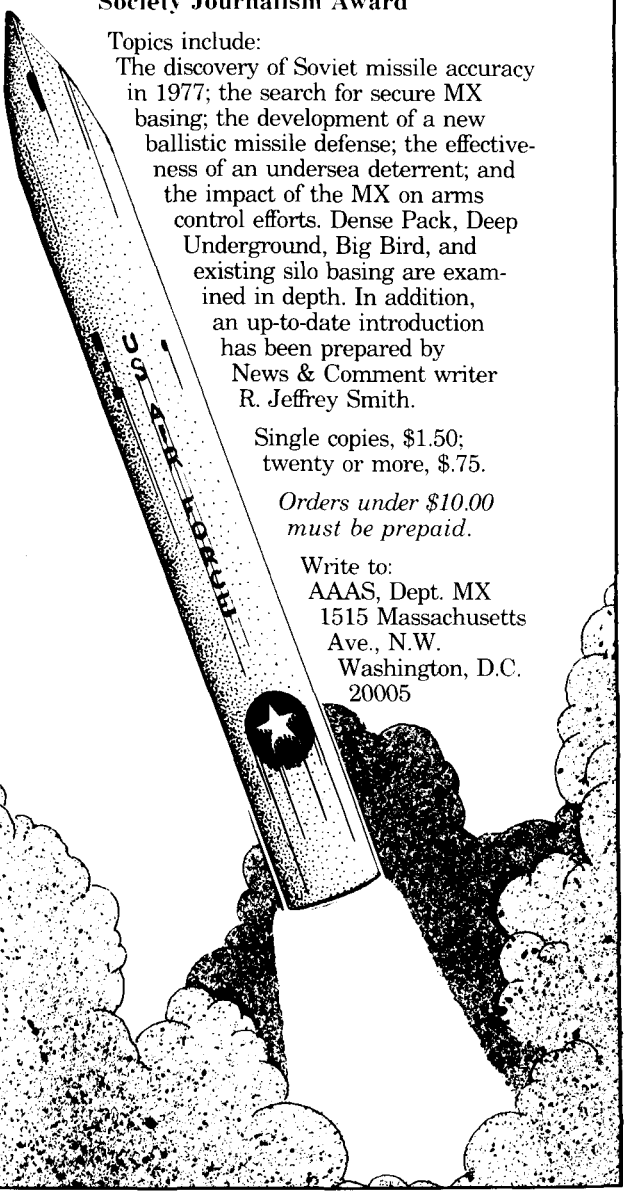

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The Pope finds the church trapped on the battleground.

CENTRAL AMERICAN PIETÀ

BY SHIRLEY CHRISTIAN

San Salvador

A couple of years ago a Spanish Jesuit priest working in El Salvador offered a biting analysis of Pope John Paul II's sense of timing and geography. The Pope, he complained, managed to clash with local sensitivities wherever he traveled. "He goes to the United States and says no women priests. He goes to Africa and says no married priests. And he comes to Latin America and says no priests in politics." A short time later, this priest went off to Europe to work for the political front of the Salvadoran guerrilla movement, and the last I heard he was contemplating marriage.

It is just as well that he is not here to witness the reaction to the Pope's swing through Central America, Panama, and Haiti last month. The Pontiff talked of human rights and peace and social justice, but he was mainly trying to set Roman Catholicism's own house in order. That is the most politically sensitive issue of all in a region where the Church has let itself get trapped in the middle of the battleground. It is not a simple church-state conflict that buffets the Roman Catholic Church in Central America. In varying degrees around the region the Church is challenged by Marxism-Leninism and by Protestantism, and its clergy is divided over how to serve the poor and defend human rights.

Two dramatic events among many that occurred during the Pope's trip demonstrate some of these tensions. In El Salvador two priests sent the Pope a letter asking for papal understanding of the pastoral intent of their work in a guerrilla camp in the Morazan region. They also pleaded with him to make a statement against U.S. intervention. The Pope did not react publicly to the letter, but during his stop in Nicaragua he shook his finger at another priest in a controversial role. When Father Ernesto Cardenal, the Nicaraguan minister of culture and one of many priests and nuns serving the Sandinista government, took off his black beret and went down on his knees in blue jeans to kiss the Pope's ring, John Paul responded with an admonishment for Cardenal to straighten out his relations with the Church. (The Vatican and the Nicaraguan Church hierarchy have been trying for more than two years to get Cardenal and other priests, including Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto, to resign from the government.) Later Cardenal joined unruly Sandinista soldiers and militia in chanting *poder popular* (people's power), with their left fists jabbing the air while the Pope administered communion.

Much of the turmoil in the Church in Central America arises from differing interpretations of the "preferential option for the poor" consensus that came out of the 1969 conference of Latin American bishops in Medellin, Colombia. Throughout the 1970s priests and nuns found that their search for ways to improve the lot of the poor led them to take up Marx or to align themselves with Marxist-led organizations. This was particularly true among the high percentage of foreign priests and nuns in Central America, most of them socially committed people who chafed under the authority of native-born bishops weighted down by the centuries-old tradition of Church collusion with local power interests.

The term "liberation theology" came to describe their way of thinking. An offshoot was the *iglesia popular* or "people's church," a grass-roots movement that differs from the established Church more on political than on spiritual grounds. Some liberation theologians found a precedent for the full or partial acceptance of Marxism among Christians in Salvador Allende's Chile of the early 1970s. Ernesto Cardenal has told me he was first attracted to Marxism when he went to Cuba and decided that the revolutionary process there constituted the gospel. Then, he says, he went to Chile and met priests who told him it was possible to be both Marxist and Christian.

Bloody years followed for the Church in Central America, particularly in El Salvador and Guatemala, as reactionary forces came to see almost any socially active priest or nun as identical with the Communists they had been trained to hate and kill since the days of John Foster Dulles. Ten priests have been murdered in Guatemala since June 1978, and a dozen priests and three nuns were murdered in El Salvador between early 1977 and the end of 1980. One of them was Archbishop Oscar Romero, shot down as he said mass in a hospital chapel on March 24, 1980, the day after he ordered security forces in the name of God not to obey orders to kill.

The last of the religious workers to die violently in El Salvador were the three American nuns and the Catholic

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lay worker killed by national guardsmen in early December 1980. A few months before her death, Maryknoll nun Ita Ford described in a letter home something of the dilemma facing her and many other Church people. "It is a heavy scene," she wrote, "but if we have a preferential option for the poor as well as a commitment for justice as a basis for the coming of the Kingdom, we are going to have to take sides in Salvador—correction—we have."

Ten years after the Latin American Church set out on its "option for the poor" odyssey, the bishops gathered again—this time in Puebla, Mexico, in 1979—and the new Pope began trying to guide the Church into a less conflictual position. He especially opposed development of the "people's church," saying, among other things, that there could not be one Church for the poor and another for everybody else. On his recent trip, the Pope seemed to be telling Church people to find ways to serve the poor and defend human rights without taking off for the hills to join guerrillas or choosing sides in temporal political disputes. It may, however, be too late simply to tell people to stop and turn around.

THE CHURCH SPLIT is most evident in Nicaragua, where a "people's church" has developed that is noisy and active, though probably unable to claim the loyalty of anywhere near the majority of Nicaraguan Catholics. When the Sandinistas came to power nearly four years ago, they had a lot of backing from priests and nuns and even the indirect help of Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo, who took a leadership role in opposing the former Somoza dynasty. Unlike Marxist-Leninist groups that have come to power in other countries, the Sandinistas decided not to confront the Church head on, apparently taking heed of the significant clerical representation in its membership and the strong religiosity among Nicaraguans. Like the Pope's native land, Nicaragua has a love affair with the Virgin Mary that exceeds most such expressions in Latin America.

So the Sandinistas decided to work through religion. Their approach is obvious in a catchy rhyme that the government runs in television spots to appeal to Christians and uses as a chant at rallies: "Between Christianity and revolution there is no contradiction." Archbishop Obando y Bravo initially took a wait-and-see attitude toward the revolution, but now has openly challenged the government over what he sees as an attempt to create an alternative religious structure that justifies Marxist policies in Christian terms. He says the government and its advocates are trying to turn Jesus Christ into one more believer in Marx. Speaking of the nuns and priests who believe in the "people's church" concept, the archbishop told me: "They think that to be a Christian one has to be Marxist, because only Marxism liberates. In their attitudes they are against the hierarchy, against the Pope, against the institutional Church. They say they are the Church of the poor, but that is only the mask they present to impress."

One of the "people's church" advocates, a Spanish Dominican priest named Rafael Aragon, told me that one of his reasons for working with the Sandinistas is to try to influence them along a more moderate revolutionary path. He argues that it is easier to prevent radicalization by working from within than without. "Our problem is not ideology," he said. "Our problem is in practical areas. We support a transformation . . . so we are supporting a revolutionary process that is occurring through a rationale that may be Marxism. We are going to see how far Marxism and the faith can go together."

THIS CONFLICT has produced numerous violent, and occasionally deadly, clashes between Sandinista militants and supporters of the Church hierarchy. The archbishop has been pursued into churches by mobs; one of his key aides was forced to run naked before state television cameras; slugfests have broken out around altars; some churches have been sacked, and some schools closed. The tension erupted in front of the Pope, who had to conduct his mass before billboards lauding revolutionary heroes and a crowd that had been carefully arranged to have Sandinista soldiers and militants closest to him. The night before the mass, several thousand supporters of the Church hierarchy tried to march into the Plaza and camp out on the front rows, but they were turned back by security forces firing AK-47s into the air.

In the Nicaraguan Church conflict, however, the hierarchy has not been as impotent as the violence against it might indicate. Archbishop Obando y Bravo is a blunt, brown-skinned man of the countryside who knows his constituency as well as any good ward politician. He appears to hold a strong conviction that, except when it involves guns, he can win the battle with the Sandinistas. Both sides play dirty by manipulating the religious nature of Nicaraguans. The hierarchy, especially the archbishop, has gone to great lengths to interest Nicaraguans in the reported sighting of the Virgin in a village called Cuapa. The pro-hierarchy newspaper *La Prensa* treats pilgrimages to the site as major news and carries photos of the faithful on their knees in the open field. On the other hand, a few months ago I heard one of the members of the Sandinista National Directorate, Jaime Wheelock, tell a group of Miskito Indians, a largely uneducated people with even stronger religious convictions than those of other Nicaraguans, that the Sandinistas were the same as Christ. "Christ was preaching a doctrine for the poor, not the rich," he said. "And the imperialists killed him. Not just because he was the Son of God but because he came in representation of the poor. The imperialists and the bad pastors killed Christ as also, now, the imperialists and the Somoza people and the false and bad pastors want this revolutionary process to end."

There are some people within the Vatican and in Nicaragua who, although not "people's church" advocates, believe the archbishop has become too political in opposing the government so openly, and that he should be more conciliatory if he expects to bring the "people's church"

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back to the fold. The papal nuncio in Nicaragua is reportedly furthering the idea of the Church hierarchy putting itself above the political fray and concentrating on the defense of its own turf—such as religious education and human rights. Though papal homilies can be interpreted many ways, it appears the Pope gave some backing to this idea when he appealed to the Nicaraguan bishops to move closer to their priests. However, the appeal was hardly noticed in all the shouting.

IN EL SALVADOR, where Archbishop Arturo Rivera y Damas has been trying to guide the Church, in his words, "equidistant between the two bands" contending for power, the Pope found a Church seemingly at peace with itself. Though elevated to archbishop only as the Pope prepared for his Central American trip, Rivera y Damas has been administering the San Salvador archdiocese since the death of his friend Archbishop Romero three years ago. Because of the turmoil in which the Salvadoran Church was caught up at the time of Romero's death, the Pope apparently chose to delay formally naming the successor until he saw how much Rivera y Damas would accomplish in quieting the political ferment in the Church.

Once Romero's only sympathizer in the Salvadoran bishop's conference on social issues, Rivera y Damas is less charismatic but more intellectually astute than his predecessor. Since taking over the archdiocese he has tried to condemn all belligerents for their transgressions, saying that he believes the majority of the Salvadoran people do not want the guerrillas to come to power, but that they do want a government that will deal more effectively with questions of social and economic justice than any of their governments to date. During the homily the Pope delivered in El Salvador, he seemed to entrust to the new Church leader a more active role in establishing some kind of dialogue between the government and guerrillas. He also warned him to take care with parties (which he did not name) driven by an ideology that is hostile to Christian aspirations.

Under the stewardship of Rivera y Damas, no priest or nun has been murdered in El Salvador since the deaths of the four American women more than two years ago. However, a number of priests and possibly a nun or two have taken to the hills or gone into exile to serve the cause of the guerrillas in various ways. Three Belgian priests took this step after the bishop ordered them to disband the "church of the poor" that they had organized under the nose of the late archbishop. Although the new archbishop and the Vatican have also succeeded in reducing open antagonism from the extreme right against the numerous Jesuits in El Salvador, some of them brood unhappily about the restrictions on their activities.

Simultaneously with the rise of the "people's church" and other concepts of an activist clergy has come the rise of Protestantism in Central America, which appears to be partly a reaction to the conflicts in the Catholic Church. Guatemala, where about 20 percent of the population is considered Protestant, is the most obvious example; and some analysts predict that a majority of Guatemalans will be Protestant by the end of the century. However, other Central American countries are experiencing the same phenomenon. In Nicaragua, for example, Protestant denominations and fundamentalist sects claim a total of about 15 percent of the population.

Various explanations and theories are advanced for this shift. One is the aggressive missionary work by fundamentalists and sects. In Guatemala, whose president, General Efrain Rios Montt, is the most prominent Protestant in the region, the denominations and sects picked up many of their followers among Indians in the highlands and other war-torn regions when Catholic priests left for security reasons. Anyone who drives through a town in the Indian province of El Quiché on a weekend can hear hymns pouring out of simple buildings used by the fundamentalists on Saturday nights, and see the big Catholic Church on the square closed and barred on Sunday mornings. This is one of the things the Vatican was considering when it began asking priests to return to El Quiché a few months ago.

GENERAL RIOS MONTT, who is the brother of a Catholic bishop, refuses to characterize himself as a convert from Catholicism; he says he simply moved closer to God by joining an evangelical church. In El Salvador, Church analysts see that same kind of attitude. One priest told me he was losing parishioners to Protestant churches because a simple faith seemed to make people feel closer to God's protection and influence in these dangerous times. It was the conversion to fundamentalist Protestantism by one of the national guardsmen who killed the four American missionaries that led to his confession and the arrest of other guardsmen. Other theories of the rising influence of Protestantism include a desire by many people to escape their own emotional and political conflicts about the activism of the Catholic clergy. Archbishop Rivera y Damas has said that people who leave his Church are looking for a form of religion that, while more personal, can be more passive politically.

In the end, however, even fundamentalist Protestantism does not exempt the faithful from the turmoil of Central America. Religious faith has played a role in at least one massacre in El Salvador, and possibly others, because members of fundamentalist sects often refuse to leave combat areas on the grounds that they are not involved with either side in the war. In Nicaragua, even the Protestants have split over their attitudes toward the Sandinista revolution, with most of the mainline denominations supporting the government and the fundamentalist sects opposing it. Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomás Borge claims that these latter groups are really C.I.A. agents masquerading as missionaries.

The message the Pope left behind in response to all of these Central American issues seems quite clear: pluralism in the Church has gone too far, and he intends to help restore unity by using a strong guiding hand.

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Is the Vice Presidency a school for Presidents?

MONDALE ON MONDALE

BY MORTON KONDRACKE

ON A SPRING AFTERNOON in 1980, Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale met in the Roosevelt Room of the White House to pose for the joint photograph that would later adorn their re-election campaign poster. The photographer asked Mondale to stand behind Carter, in such a way that the Vice President's head would be visible over the President's left shoulder. "Could you move in a little closer, Mr. Vice President?" the photographer asked. Mondale complied. He was now practically touching the President, but the photographer was still not satisfied. "Just a little closer, please." A faint smile flickered across Mondale's face. "If I get any closer than this," he remarked, "we'll carry California."

It says something about Walter Mondale's wit that he ventured this joke. It says something, too, about Jimmy Carter's innocence that he didn't get it. In personality and often in political outlook, they were an odd couple. Yet they got together and created something that was supposed to be an impossibility: a Vice Presidency (if not a Presidency) that worked. That it did work is largely taken for granted now; it shouldn't be, considering how much in the Carter Administration did not work. There was no precedent for the Vice Presidential role that Carter and Mondale fashioned—that of intimate adviser, free-floating trouble-shooter, personal diplomatic representative, and political advocate. Many a previous President had promised to make the Vice Presidency something more than a vestigal appendage; in every case, the promise went unfulfilled. The Vice President got to be the political hatchetman or the chairman of the space advisory council, or the chief international crepe hanger, but little more. Inevitably, the Vice President fell afoul of the President's staff or the President's own jealousy. Inevitably, even talented Vice Presidents like Lyndon Johnson, Hubert Humphrey, and Nelson Rockefeller were not merely humbled by the office, but humiliated.

No such thing happened to Walter Mondale. All the stories about his Vice Presidency are true in this respect: he was "in the loop" on practically every high policy decision of the Carter Administration. Unlike any of his predecessors, he had an office in the White House West Wing, right between those of the national security adviser and the White House chief of staff, and just around the corner from the Oval Office. He had routine access to all policy papers and meetings, and his staff was an integral part of the White House staff structure. Mondale was assigned no regular "line" responsibilities that would either bog him down or give him turf to protect; instead, he could jump from problem to problem as he and Carter saw fit. And he had lunch with the President every Monday, giving him an opportunity to offer candid advice.

This structure—most of it carried forward by the Reagan Administration and, perhaps, institutionalized—was laid out in a memo drafted by Mondale's staff and signed by Carter on December 9, 1977. "Periodically we'd take it out and look at it," says Mondale's former chief of staff, Richard Moe, "and find to our amazement that we were following it."

That the system worked is perhaps most remarkable because Carter and Mondale were such different people, and came, along with their staffs, from such different places—not just from Georgia and Minnesota, but, more importantly, from Georgia and Washington, D.C. Carter ran as "an outsider in Washington," and that is how he refers to himself in his memoirs. Mondale was Mr. Inside, the intimate of members of Congress, interest groups, and the Washington social establishment—all the people who distrusted Carter. Yet "Carter thought having Mondale was a considerable asset," says Hamilton Jordan, Carter's chief of staff, "and so did I." Carter has gone so far as to endorse Mondale's candidacy for President.

It is not true, as some have charged, that Mondale is repaying the favor by seeking to distance himself from Carter. The charges arise, most recently, from an interview that Mondale gave to Curtis Wilkie and Tom Oliphant of *The Boston Globe*, in which Mondale confirmed that he had disagreed with Carter on a number of important policy questions, including Carter's 1979 "malaise" speech and the firing of Cabinet officers; the post-Afghanistan embargo of grain to the Soviet Union; Carter's refusal to campaign during the early months of the Iran hostage crisis; and the abortive decision to deploy the MX missile system in a "racetrack" mode.

As it happens, I interviewed Mondale on the same day (February 17) and on basically the same subject as Wilkie and Oliphant. I found Mondale willing (but not anxious) to talk about differences with Carter—to the *Globe* list, he added Carter's mass cancellation of Western water projects in 1977 and too-public conduct of Middle East diplomacy—but far more interested in discussing what

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he learned as Vice President that would qualify him to be President.

The point is that Mondale is seeking to establish an independent identity from Carter, but is not trying (and couldn't if he wanted) to deny that he was (as Carter puts it) "truly second in command, involved in every aspect of governing." "I am not running away from that Administration at all," Mondale said. "President Carter was as kind to me as any President has ever been [to a Vice President]. I learned in a way I could not have learned any other way my sense of confidence and my ability to be President, to shape a government, where the talent is, how the Presidency works, my knowledge of adversaries as well as friends, my experience in international relations, dealing with intelligence problems and defense problems and Congress—all of that has been possible because I was Vice President."

In that interview and in another one on March 4, Mondale went out of his way to recite a list of Carter accomplishments that tend to get forgotten in the general assessment that Carter's was a "failed Presidency." Mondale cited Carter's energy decontrol program, the Camp David treaty, normalization with China, negotiation of SALT II, completion and ratification of the Panama Canal treaties, restoration of relations with black Africa, and emphasis on human rights overseas and civil rights at home. "We also had a lot of problems: the tripling of oil prices was a disaster that overloaded the economic circuits of all the democracies. And, of course, the Iranian humiliation was terrible. I realize that we had strengths and weaknesses."

ALTHOUGH it's widely believed that Carter is a political albatross in Mondale's campaign for the Presidency, Mondale specifically referred to him in his announcement speech. In fact, it's not clear how the Carter connection cuts for Mondale politically. A David Garth poll last December showed that 25 percent of voters were "more likely" to support Mondale because of his Vice Presidential experience, 15 percent "less likely," and the rest felt it made no difference. Hamilton Jordan, a shrewd strategist, thinks that Carter is a distinct asset in the South (where Carter polled 44 percent of the vote in 1980) and throughout the country (where he polled 41 percent).

Those who criticize Mondale for talking about his Vice Presidency claim that for tactical reasons (to avoid endless rehashing of the Carter years), or out of loyalty, Mondale should just smile, genuflect toward Plains, and keep quiet on the subject. But that would deny the public important information about a man who wants to be President. If he was "second in command" of the country, and wants to be first, we ought to know as much as possible about what he actually did.

There are those who say that he wrecked the Carter Presidency. The most prominent such person—and so far the only one willing to stand up and be counted publicly—is former Attorney General Griffin Bell, who says in his book *Taking Care of the Law* that Carter "failed" partly because "he staffed the government with McGovern people, with Kennedy people—with people with no feelings of loyalty toward him, and more important, with a different view of government. President Carter did this unwittingly by accepting the so-called Washington government-in-waiting." Carter's "crucial error," Bell writes, was in moving Mondale into the West Wing, where he impressed on the government policies and personnel that were "not the same" as Carter's. Carter's views, according to Bell, were "well to the right of Vice President Mondale's."

BELL BASES THIS ARGUMENT on the fact that Mondale intervened in a few important Justice Department cases, especially the Bakke reverse discrimination case and a Texas police brutality case. Mondale agrees that he shifted Administration policy to the left in these cases. He says it was with Carter's specific approval. Other former Administration officials make a more sweeping condemnation than Bell's, though they are not willing to be quoted by name. "Griffin Bell made an ideological thing out of it," said one former White House aide, "but mush was what basically was coming from the policy process, and Mondale was the architect of that process. That was a Mondale government as much as it was a Carter government. The Cabinet and sub-Cabinet people reflected more Mondale's orientation than Carter's. Ham [Jordan] and Jody [Powell] deferred to Mondale, and Stu Eizenstat was his ally. Carter lost his way as soon as he got into the White House. He was captured by his government, and Mondale constructed most of the government. It was a government without a theme, résumé government. Mondale represented the consensus of conventional liberalism."

Along a similar line, another ex-White House aide says, "I disagree with Griffin Bell on this. The blame for the Carter Administration's failures do not lie with Mondale because he was plugging for Carter to be too liberal. I blame Carter for acquiescing. Mondale's big negative is that he tried to turn the Carter Administration into a traditional liberal coalition—a liberal, reactive Administration. With him, there was always some group Carter had to respond to. Labor and civil rights groups got Humphrey-Hawkins. The National Education Association got the Department of Education. Mondale talked Carter into keeping the $50 tax rebate [in 1977] even though the economy was turning around. I never went into a meeting when he didn't take the liberal Democratic special interest line on issues. That's where his heart is and what he believes, which suggests lack of discretion and judgment."

What's striking about critics of Mondale's Vice Presidency is how contradictory they are. Some claim he led a coup by Washington insiders. But another former Administration official said Mondale was "a wimp—a guy who flowed with the heaviest tides. You couldn't tell where his central philosophy was." Bell and others criticize him as too liberal, but a former civil rights and human rights activist says, "he really disappeared as any kind of liberal voice." He is accused of having been the reflexive voice of Democratic interest groups, yet one other former White

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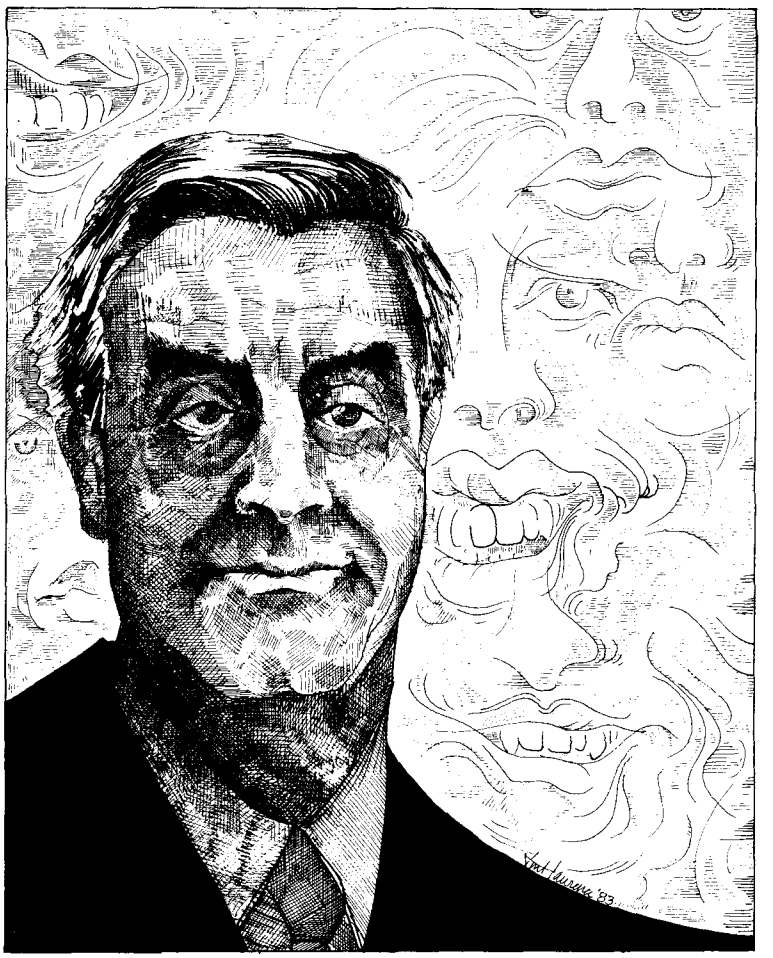
House aide says, "He was brought on to balance the ticket, ideologically and geographically, and to be the voice of Washington. His job was to make the fight—not win, just represent the people he was chosen to represent. I never saw him do it. He once told me that he didn't fight in staff meetings, but did when he was alone with the President. Who's to know? I don't believe it." This official was particularly pained that Mondale supported Carter's decision to sell F-15 fighters to Saudi Arabia and takes it as evidence that Mondale failed to stand up for Israel. Yet a former State Department official says that Mondale "was reflexively, unthinkingly, totally pro-Israel."

So what, in fact, did Mondale do and represent in the Carter Administration? He certainly did have a hand in selecting many Cabinet secretaries. Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, H.E.W. Secretary Joseph Califano, and Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal are said to have been Mondale candidates, and after the 1979 Cabinet shake-up (which Carter says Mondale urged and Mondale remains very vague about), Mondale was responsible for recruiting New Orleans Mayor Moon Landrieu for HUD and Portland Mayor Neil Goldschmidt for Transportation. Mondale did urge creation of the Department of Education, and he opposed cancellation of the $50 tax rebate proposal, an economic stimulus that wasn't necessary at a time of imminent inflationary explosion. Mondale says that the 1979 tripling of oil prices was the major cause of hyperinflation, but that as early as 1978 he was calling for stiff anti-inflation guidelines, though not wage and price controls or the monetary crunch imposed by Paul Volcker.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

According to Stuart Eizenstat, Carter's White House domestic adviser and now a Mondale supporter, Mondale "was more liberal than Carter," especially on budgetary, economic, and social issues. "He tended to favor more money for domestic spending rather than defense, though he was for real defense increases. He was for more money for education, job training, and jobs programs. He was against fighting inflation with austerity, especially the budget cuts of 1980. There was no increase in domestic spending in real terms for all of our four years. Mondale was fighting the trend all the way."

Carter, Mondale, Jordan, and other officials agree on Mondale's style of disagreeing. It was not "public" at all, in the sense of letting differences be known outside the White House. The one exception was the July 1979 battle of Camp David, in which Mondale argued—and let Elizabeth Drew of *The New Yorker* know he argued—that it was "crazy" for Carter to accept pollster Patrick Caddell's proposal to cancel a scheduled television address on energy and substitute an analysis of how a "crisis of confidence" (the word "malaise" was in a Caddell briefing, not the Carter speech) had seized the soul of the nation. The controversy still rankles with Caddell, who persists in his search for a charismatic alternative to Mondale to lead the Democratic Party and the nation.

According to former officials, Mondale did not go "public" with his disagreements with Carter even in most White House staff meetings, but did so privately with Carter. Mondale told me: "I discovered that if you made arguments publicly or in, say, a National Security Council or a Cabinet meeting, or in interagency groups, almost always the participants thought it was a signal from the President and it would tilt the advice he was getting. I didn't want that. Occasionally, I would do it, but I tried to make my views known to the President privately, and sometimes very strongly. Once I made my case, though, and I was sure the President understood it, and I made a thorough argument, I didn't rag him. Once his decision was made, I didn't try to make life miserable for him. I wouldn't want a Vice President of mine to do that, and I didn't try to do it to him."

If it had been up to Mondale, Carter would not have committed one of his earliest disasters—unsuccessfully trying to cancel scores of pork-barrel water projects dear to the hearts of many members of Congress. "I had spent a

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lot of years in the Senate," Mondale told me, "and was morally certain that if we tried to get rid of thirty or sixty water projects, we weren't going to get rid of any. We would automatically develop a coalition that was unbeatable, and, more than that, give the West a feeling we were insensitive. I recommended to Carter that he pick one or two or three bad projects, consult with the governors, and make a case. But the President felt very strongly about it and pursued the course he did and regrettably it came out the way I had predicted."

The water fight got Carter off on the wrong foot with Congress, and he never fully recovered. Some Mondale critics claim that if he was such an expert at Congressional relations, he should have been able to patch things up for Carter. Former Carter adviser Robert Strauss says, "Mondale thought Carter was missing a bet not to deal one-on-one more with Tip and Bob Byrd. Mondale talked to me and to Carter about it, but Carter just didn't like that wheeling and dealing." Others say the problem was not the quantity of Carter's contacts with Congress, but the quality. "Carter just didn't know how to schmooze," said one former aide. Former press secretary Jody Powell says, "Mondale was certainly helpful, and Congressional relations would have been worse without him. But personal contacts are overemphasized. The problem was much deeper. Carter had no personal allies up there. Nobody was going to carry his water out of personal loyalty, and we were asking Congress to do some tough, politically painful stuff."

Mondale, curiously, gets bashed both for being a loyal soldier for Carter in resisting interest group pressures and for being too close to such groups. Actually, he was both and neither. He was a friend of labor, for example, but he fought the unions on the issue of admitting hundreds of thousands of Southeast Asian refugees. Eizenstat says Mondale "is almost solely responsible for averting a catastrophe" in getting U.S. Navy ships to rescue boat people at sea. In discussing interest groups, Mondale told me: "I am not in politics to get away from my family. I am in it to see the public interest served. But you don't serve the public interest without listening to the people who represent people in this country—and gaining their trust. I am not a captive of any group, but I do try to earn the trust and confidence and gain the advice of people across the board. I don't apologize for that. I don't see how you lead otherwise."

Mondale did show independence from the Israel lobby. In fact, he has suffered some trouble as a candidate because of the late Moshe Dayan's assertion (in his final book, *Breakthrough*) that in 1977, during Dayan's initial trip to Washington as Menachem Begin's Foreign Minister, Mondale and Carter "launched into charge after charge against Israel" over the issue of West Bank settlements. Dayan declared, "What I resented most was the part played by Vice President Mondale, who . . . whenever the President showed signs of calming down . . . jumped in with fresh complaints which disrupted the talk. I was disgusted." Mondale also is faulted for persuading Senator Muriel Humphrey of Minnesota to vote for the Saudi F-15 sale.

SOME ILLUMINATION on this—not entirely flattering to Mondale, either—comes in the forthcoming memoirs of National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, entitled *Power and Principle*. According to Brzezinski, "Mondale's most important substantive contribution was his political judgment. He was a vital political barometer for the President, and . . . had a good sense of political timing. For example, in the early months he was quite keen on pushing hard with our Middle East peace initiatives, even if it meant some transitory conflicts with the Israelis. He became particularly tough-minded after Begin's accession to power." However, "by late 1978, with the congressional elections near and the Presidential season gradually beginning, Fritz became an advocate of a rather passive U.S. posture, tilted in favor of the Israelis."

Mondale's version of all this is that he did feel he should be "candid" with the Israelis about settlements, which "I do not think are illegal, as our Administration said, but can be an obstacle to peace." Mondale says Carter knew in advance how he was going to handle Dayan, but that the two were not (as Brzezinski reports) playing good cop / bad cop. Mondale says he opposed "excessively public" Mideast diplomacy, in which the Administration, Israel, and Egypt did their negotiating in the newspapers. He takes credit, after a trip to the Mideast in 1978, for suggesting that the United States get Begin and Anwar Sadat to negotiate face-to-face, as they ultimately did at Camp David. Toward the end of the Administration, Mondale did seem to lean toward Israel, opposing an enhancement package for the Saudi F-15s and urging reversal of a U.N. vote condemning Israeli settlements. In 1979, when the Camp David process seemed to be falling apart, he opposed Carter's last-ditch (and successful, as it turned out) negoti-

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ating trip to salvage a peace. Mondale, reportedly, was afraid that the mission would fail and that both Camp David and the President's political fortunes would suffer.

Brzezinski and other critics implicitly raise an old doubt about Mondale: does he have guts? Some foes on the political side of the Carter White House claim Mondale declined to go bare-knuckles with Senator Edward M. Kennedy in the 1980 Democratic primaries (though Kennedy accused Mondale of questioning his patriotism). Brzezinski's book shows Mondale opposing a military coup to preserve a pro-Western regime in Iran, wavering on (but finally supporting) the decision to let the Shah into the U.S., and supporting the Iran hostage rescue mission. As time went on, Brzezinski says, "I could sense that Fritz was uneasy about my inclination to make an issue of Soviet aggressiveness in the third world. I argued that otherwise detente would be jeopardized, while Fritz felt that my reactions were endangering SALT. In that sense, he was closer to Vance's view. I also did not share his strong inclination to impose very strict restrictions on C.I.A. activities. . . . In general, Carter rarely if ever thought of foreign policy in terms of domestic politics, while Mondale rarely if ever thought of it otherwise."

BRZEZINSKI thinks that Mondale would have joined Secretary of State Edmund Muskie in trying to oust him in a second Carter Administration, and that could well be right. When I asked Mondale about his model for a National Security Adviser, he said, "I always thought [Brent] Scowcroft [President Ford's adviser] was an ideal director. I thought he was smart and experienced in his own views. He was a private person. But he was respected by all the players." In a Mondale Administration, the N.S.C. "would not be just a passive post box" as it has been under Reagan. "It ought to generate ideas. You can't get a person of stature that is a eunuch. On the other hand, he has to be an honest spokesman, who will fairly reflect the views of State and Defense, an honest broker." Mondale puts great stress on team play in an Administration and makes it clear he abhors "backbiting and leaking" of personal differences. "We paid a hell of a price for it" in the Carter Administration, he says.

Which brings us to what Mondale would do, perhaps differently, if he were in charge of his own Administration. "First of all," he said, "the President needs to know where the talent is. He needs to know a lot about personalities, because who leads the government, and their ability to work together, is crucial to an Administration. And you have to know this before you go in, because undoing it is always traumatic, as we have now seen." Some of Mondale's top aides, reflecting on Carter's mistakes, are determined to keep White House control not only of Cabinet appointments if Mondale is elected, but of sub-Cabinet jobs as well. Carter mistakenly ceded lower-level appointment power to Cabinet officers and lost control of the government.

Mondale said he is determined to have a "strong staff that speaks for the President, that receives and delegates authority. There is no way that the so-called 'spokes-on-a-wheel' strategy, which was Carter's announced approach, could work." Instead of having several equals reporting to the President, even Carter ultimately decided (in 1979) that he needed a single chief of staff, Hamilton Jordan. Mondale said he would use the chief-of-staff system from the outset, as he did as Vice President, and would maintain a domestic advisory staff modeled on the National Security Council system.

According to Mondale, "the most important, most indispensable power of a President is his perceived public support. Once it is thought that a President has lost it, it is almost impossible, regardless of the theoretical powers of the Presidency, to govern effectively. That's why I say I am running not to get elected, but to get a mandate—the basic moral authority, the political authority that a President has to have.

"The next point is that you can't do too much. There have to be priorities, and a coherent, achievable, describable agenda which occupies the central focus of the public dialogue." After Carter's initial blinding blitz of legislative proposals in 1977, Mondale was put in charge of a priority project that Eizenstat says actually worked, but was never appreciated. In any event, Mondale says that in a Mondale Administration he would see to it that subordinate projects were relegated to the Cabinet, the sub-Cabinet, and the staff while the President attended to "the central themes . . . four or five fundamental thrusts" that he also plans to make the focus of his Presidential campaign. These include economic growth, "human talent development," international competitiveness, defense, arms control, and a foreign policy that is "coherent, credible, durable, and persuasive, with a moral underpinning."

FINALLY, Mondale said, "a President must have discipline. When a President decides, it means that people have got to do what the President asks, or get out." Mondale said he would appoint strong subordinates representing varying points of view and who would express themselves candidly—but would shut up when a decision was made. One gets the impression that his model is himself as Vice President and that job aspirants would do well to study the example.

To some, all this is dull stuff, devoid of emotional uplift and the spark needed to transport the public and transform American politics. It's true enough that Mondale, for all his newfound pizzazz on the stump, was no charismatic superhero as Vice President and probably wouldn't be one as President. He could not save the Carter Administration from itself, though he did try to improve it where he could. He was an active, deeply involved, loyal, and discreet Vice President. Of the Democratic candidates for President, he is now clearly the most experienced at governing. His Vice Presidential background obviously doesn't guarantee that he would be a good President, but it must help to have seen how things work and how they don't. Certainly the Carter and Reagan Presidencies do not recommend inexperience as a qualification.

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

An Apartment in Brussels

Anyone who knows Franz Xaver Kroetz's play *Request Concert* will be reminded of it by Chantal Akerman's film *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles*. Kroetz, a German, wrote *Request Concert* in 1973: it was published here in a collection of his plays in 1976 and was produced Off Broadway in 1981. It's a long and wordless one-act play—the only sounds are TV and radio—in which the one character, a woman in her early forties, comes home to her small apartment in a Bavarian city after a day's work and does what she does every night: changes clothes, goes to the bathroom, makes and eats dinner, washes stockings, knits, and so on. Then she goes to bed. Then, just as if it were equally routine, she gets up and takes an overdose of pills.

Jeanne Dielman,
23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles
(Paradise Films)

Akerman, a Belgian, made her film in 1975. Film journals have discussed it recurrently since then, but it has only just arrived—at the Film Forum in New York. The title sets the dot-in-the-cosmos tone of the picture. It runs three hours and eighteen minutes. It follows three days in the life of a lower-middle-class Brussels widow, about forty. She lives in a comfortably but tastelessly furnished apartment with her student son who is away all day and with whom at night she barely converses, not out of antipathy—there's no hint that they dislike each other—but out of inertia. In the first day, we follow her in her routines; the second day, the routines are slightly condensed, but we see her make a few slips and mistakes; the third day is a bit more condensed and there are a few more slips.

The only significant way in which Dielman differs from other women like her is that she is a (discreet) prostitute. Every afternoon she has one customer. Each one is a "regular," and she receives each one identically, with a shopkeeper's greeting, then hangs his hat and coat in the hall closet, takes him down the hall to the bedroom, and closes the door. Then a time-lapse, dim-and-return of lights, and she escorts him out, both of them fully dressed, gives him his hat and coat, takes his money, and says goodbye until next week. She puts the money in a covered china tureen on the dining-room table. Her schedule of customers is much like her schedule of evening meals: she has a dinner dish scheduled in order for each night of the week, served to herself and her son with that tureen pulled to one side.

The third day, however, the day of slightly increased slips in her routine, the bedroom procedure varies. We go in there with her and the man. We see her take off her blouse, nothing more. We see the naked man lying on her and satisfying himself; apparently also, he satisfies her, against her interest and will. Then we see her combing her hair while he naps on the bed. With no more hurry or emotion than she has shown in her combing, she picks up a pair of scissors and shoves them into the man's neck. Then she goes into the dining room and sits at the table that bears the tureen with her bedroom earnings. She just sits there. We know her son will be home soon. She just sits there. The room grows dimmer with evening, and the electric signs across the street flicker on the walls as they have done through the film. She seems to smile almost reflectively, as she just sits there and the film ends.

Very early, Akerman's method becomes clear. Of every action that she chooses to show in Dielman's life, she is going to show every detail. For example, after her customer leaves, Dielman undresses again and bathes. We see her in the tub as she soaps herself thoroughly, washes herself off, then soaps herself all over again and washes off again. At first the Akerman process seems merciless; then slightly ridiculous. Kroetz writes, in the introduction to *Request Concert*:

> Naturally the play must not irritate the audience, but it must provide insights for them, about the emptiness of Fräulein Rasch's life. Care must be taken that the actual activities in the play are not drawn out so as to become tedious and aggravating. When the informative content of an activity is exhausted and it only repeats itself, it should be broken off, even if it violates the form of the play, namely that stage time is equivalent to real time.

Akerman, if she knew Kroetz's play, disregarded his warning, and eventually won. The mystique of film, different from the theater's, helps her. Anything done on a stage has at least some thaumaturgic power because a person has given up some portion of his or her own life to do it for us in a highly particularized place. Tedium can quickly set in if the selected action doesn't sustain interest "horizontally"; but, initially, "vertically," it fascinates, however briefly. Tedium sets in, too, with film, during an uninteresting action, but it takes somewhat longer to arrive because the person isn't even actually there, which heightens the thaumaturgic power. Besides, on film, we can look "around" the action, examine the contextual world in ways that theater doesn't quite afford. (It's part of Antonioni's theme in *Blow-Up*.) Akerman un-

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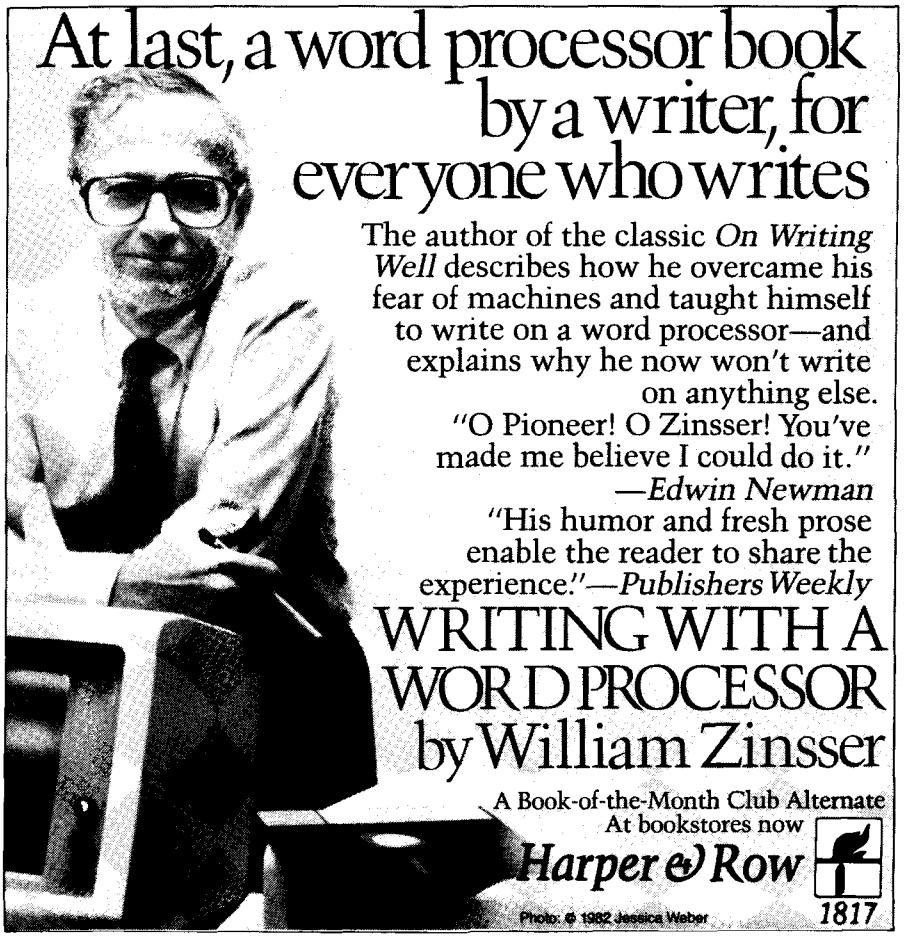
derstands this film power, and she pushes past conventional tolerance of prosaic activity so resolutely—Dielman's slow elevator rides up and down in her building, Dielman mixing a meat loaf from beginning to end—that the tedium eventually proceeds through giggle and irritation to a kind of hypnosis. I found myself almost cradled by the film's process, almost protected. I was aware that a method was being practiced on me that is as shrewd as the snip-snap montage of Eisenstein, but I became convinced that this film, if it was to exist at all, could not have existed in any other form. Stunt had given way to raison d'être. I wasn't precisely gripped, but I stopped wondering whether I wanted to leave. I began to want to survive the picture, to be able to look back on it as a whole, to see what this method had been in aid of.

Then, as the picture moved into the third day and as Dielman's errors began to increase slightly—for instance, dropping the brush with which every morning she cleans her son's shoes—I began to worry about the ending. Remembering Kroetz, I wondered whether Dielman was heading toward suicide. But Kroetz's protagonist, in her impassive suicide, had merely condensed abruptly what would have been identical lonely evenings for the next thirty-five years or so. Dielman exists—even though taciturnly—in a world of others: her son; a neighboring young wife, whom we never see, but who daily hands in a baby in a carry-cot for Dielman to mind for a short time while the mother shops; a favorite waitress in the café where Dielman stops for coffee every day after her own shopping. (On the third day, the favorite waitress isn't there, and Dielman's favorite table is taken. Further small disruptions.) Dielman has a sister in Canada who wonders why she doesn't remarry, who has sent her a birthday present. All these factors give her a quite different position from that of Kroetz's woman.

A key moment is the third day's session with the baby. Once again the unseen mother hands the carry-cot in through the front door. Once again Dielman sets it down in the living room. The baby cries a little. She picks it up and dandles it, and it cries louder. She puts it back in the carry-cot; the crying subsides. Then Dielman deliberately picks it up again; it cries louder again. Dielman seems to have discovered that she is irritating the child and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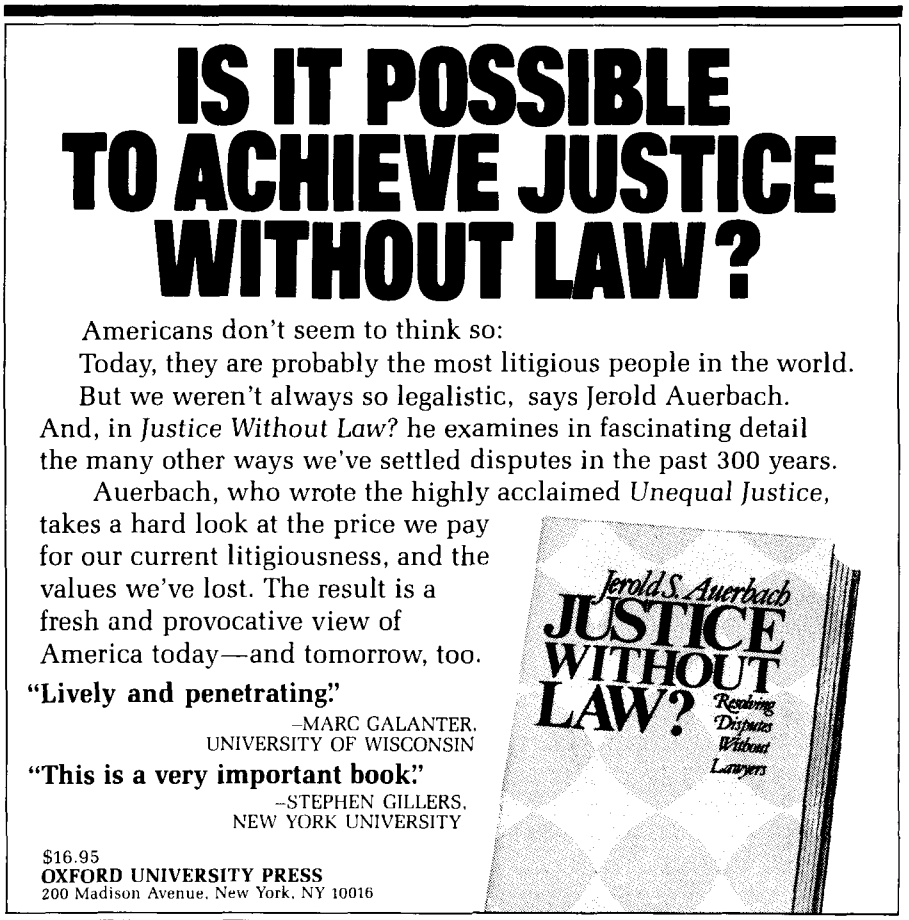
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is persisting. It suddenly flashed through my head, alerted to an "ending," that she might throw it out the window. But she returns it to the returning mother.

Still, when the ending came, it was a surprise—the best kind, a logical surprise. The scissors are in the bedroom because she brought them in to open the present from her sister, the one who thinks Dielman has remained single through choice. Perhaps the (apparent) sexual climax that the customer induced in Dielman is the ultimate invasion of privacy that snaps her. In any event, ghoulish though it may sound, I was glad when she committed the murder; it fulfilled the film, the film's method, retrospectively.

When she then sits at the dining-room table, the fee-filled tureen beside her, the body in the bedroom, her son on his way home, she seems serene, purged.

Because of the factual fabric, however, a few factual questions nag. Why is Dielman a prostitute? How could this have been her only way of earning a living? How had she set up her profession? To all neighborhood eyes, she is ultrarespectable: how had she met her first customer? And what does her son think is going on? He is in his late teens, shown in conversation to be a sexual innocent but far from stupid; what does he think is the source of the money on which they live? At one point, his complicity is even suggested: on the second night, Dielman tells him he can come home earlier the next afternoon if he likes. Does he know what happens in the afternoons? These finicky questions tug at the film's implication of huge, blindly grinding forces.

AND THE CASTING makes a small problem in verisimilitude. Dielman is played by Delphine Seyrig who is a more than competent actress but who, since *Last Year in Marienbad* (1961), has been one of the most exquisite women on the screen. It's hard to credit that a widow of her extraordinary beauty would not have attracted suitors, possibly a husband, as her sister says; would have been unable to find other work. When Syrig played the dullish spinster in *I Sent a Letter to My Love* (TNR, May 30, 1981), her role was written to let her act "against" her looks. Not here. She is not dull-witted, only ordinary, and this is less credible. I'm not contending that there are no beautiful lower-middle-class housewives, only that, on the screen, the use of a beauty in such a role seems to counter Akerman's method somewhat, seems a throwback to earlier film days when every leading female role, drudge or duchess, was cast with a beauty. If Dielman had been played by, say, Jeanne Moreau, no doubts would arise about Movieland intrusion into the film's naturalism.

But *is* it naturalism? Once again—and surely not for the last time—Akerman's film raises the fascinating question of the camera's duplicity. The more intensely factual that a film gets, the less naturalistic it becomes. Every carefully controlled frame (Babette Mangolte is the precise cinematographer) puts a set of data before us, but the concentration of the camera on those data, the disregard of the conventions of tempo and drama, of conventional motion in a motion picture, render the familiar into an abstraction even as we loll in the familiarity.

And this abstraction, this rarefied style, is ultimately the dramatic mode of Akerman's film. Some have discussed *Jeanne Dielman* as a document of woman's oppressed social position, but that view seems to me coarse and forced; nothing is shown that prevented her from making a life of her own in the years since her husband's death. For me, the film is about danger: the hairline between control and its fracture, the thin control that keeps the furies caged, against which the dailiness of stoves and shoppings and brushings and baths and neat foldings of pajamas are shored as bulwarks. In Alain Jessua's excellent *Life Upside Down* (1964), it was a man who slipped between the cracks of dailiness into unreal serenity. Here, with the fissures spaced more widely, the person who slips away, into comparable pitiful serenity, is a woman: who lives at a certain address in Brussels.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Squares in the Circle

Circle in the Square, despite illustrious beginnings, has not been a dynamic theater in recent years. Ever since this thirty-two-year-old institution accepted an invitation from the Mayor of New York to move from Greenwich Village

The Misanthrope
by Molière

Painting Churches
by Tina Howe

to a new uptown home in the Uris Theater, it has proved to be something of an anomaly. In the old days, when José Quintero held the reins, Circle in the Square was a real bucking bronco, and its revivals of underestimated masterworks by O'Neill and Williams, and such premiere productions as Genet's *The Balcony*, did much to establish the primacy of the Off Broadway movement. But just as the success of Off Broadway soon led to its absorption by the marketplace, so the prosperity of this theater helped to square the Circle until it is now an institution less concerned with producing new or neglected plays, and discovering exciting actors, than with identifying classical roles for former associates who have turned into stars.

Eventually to occupy a larger house on Bleecker Street, Circle in the Square began life producing plays in the round in Sheridan Square (hence its name). When it moved to the rather sterile Uris, it tried to preserve its commitment to arena staging with an awkward oval configuration that satisfied neither audiences nor designers; a virtue by necessity became a obstacle by choice. The uptown move was fateful in other ways. Still maintaining its nonprofit theater status for the sake of private and government grants, Circle soon became indistinguishable from a Broadway house in structure as well as in location, one result being that its single ticket prices now equal those of any nonmusical commercial show. Another example of confused identity is that Circle in the Square may be the only resident American theater that also holds membership in the Broadway League of

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New York Theaters and Producers. Still another is the way this theater produces classical plays not for a resident company but for vacationing stars.

Thus far this year, Circle in the Square has chosen vehicles for Colleen Dewhurst (*The Queen and the Rebels*) and George C. Scott (*Present Laughter*), two alumni of the Circle's 1963 production of *Desire Under the Elms* (Scott had been discovered in New York in an earlier Circle revival of Edwin Justus Mayer's *Children of Darkness*). The current production of Molière's *The Misanthrope* has been especially chosen for another Circle alumnus, Brian Bedford. As such, it displays the strengths and weaknesses of such vehicular traffic. Extremely well acted in its central role, it is also unevenly cast and timidly directed (by Stephen Porter). Aside from Bedford's performance, the show enjoys a distinct advantage in Richard Wilbur's clear, witty, pungent rendering which, like the best translations, is a supreme work of art on its own. It also benefits from Marjorie Bradley Kelloggs's victory over the Circle's limited stage—a marble inlaid floor furnished with balustrades and benches and crystal chandeliers—and from the costumes of Ann Roth which, aside from the men's Gilbert and Sullivan pastel-colored boots, have the texture and pile of clothes that look as though they have been worn.

Like many of Porter's productions, this *Misanthrope* has not really found its way out of the anthology books; despite the English accents, we are located neither in time nor place. Still, the production often engrossed me, thanks largely to its lead actor, who provided a crisp and clarifying reading of a difficult part, and although I prefer an interpretation that suggests why the play is being done, Porter's work on the text was usually precise and intelligent. The opening scene, in which Alceste rebukes his easygoing friend Philinte (Stephen D. Newman) for conforming to insincere codes of social courtesy, managed to establish character, plot, style, and theme simultaneously. It was matched by nothing that followed, but it was a memorably bitter encounter.

Sporting a long, disheveled wig that might be appropriate to Tartuffe, Bedford plays Alceste with pained eyes and puckered mouth, as if he were sucking on a sourball, sitting back on his heels and spraying the world with acid scorn. As his rational friend, Newman is imitating Bedford's accents, which sound

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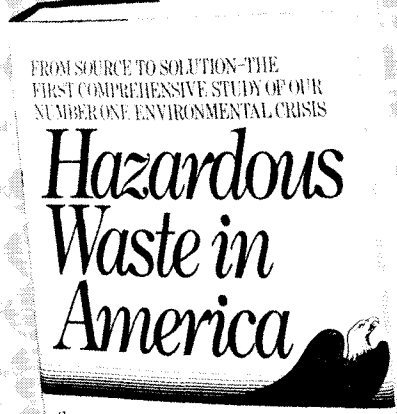
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oddly mellifluous coming out of such a creased and battered face, but he manages to inform a traditionally colorless role with conviction. The trouble is that few of the other actors are as comfortable on stage with Bedford. The Celimene of Mary Beth Hurt is a match for Alceste neither in age nor temperament. She has pertness and charm and a giggly sense of humor, but good-natured insouciance is hardly a primary characteristic of this malicious backbiter and supreme coquette. Because Celimene has lost her dark side, the slander scene has no sting, and the letter scene no force. For a flirt, exposure is a catastrophe; yet, when it is discovered that Celimene is having simultaneous affairs with four different courtiers, Miss Hurt responds with the same bemused cheer as when she is making fun of Alceste. Celimene, though shallow, is a strong adult presence; the actress plays her like a teenage tease. (Carole Shelley as Arsinoe has the opposite problem. Her style is too cutting to capture the hypocritical piety of this fraudulent prude, and she seems too preoccupied with audience contact to engage the attention of the other actors.)

So my response to this production is divided. *The Misanthrope* is such a complicated play, and a play so rarely done well, that one feels gratitude for an interpretation in which the words are spoken with cogency and clarity. Yet, there is something reserved and unintegrated about even this best of recent Circle productions that tempered my enjoyment. Circle in the Square advertises itself as an "actors' theater." Being located where it is, this means it is really a theater for stars. When celebrities determine "properties," a theater is bound to lurch instead of develop, with its artistic direction subject to the whims of agents, the vagaries of schedules. Right now, Circle in the Square is a confused hybrid. As such, it is riddled with the same compromises that are afflicting the neighborhood in which it sits.

TINA HOWE'S *Painting Churches* (Second Stage) has been warmly received, and I'd like to add a cheer and a half. The playwright is sensitive and civilized; the performances are thoughtful; Carole Rothman's direction is unobtrusive; and Heidi Landesman's setting is a miraculous transformation of a tiny space into what seems like a spacious Boston townhouse, furnished with packing boxes, antique lamps, and faded wallpaper. Yet this study of family life in disintegration struck me as mild, dusty, slightly contrived. Presumably the playwright (the daughter of the late radio commentator Quincey Howe) is working out her problems with her parents, but although this promises something resembling the tortured excavations of *A Long Day's Journey*, what we get instead is the dotty charm of *You Can't Take It With You*, the eccentric mannerisms of *Arsenic and Old Lace*. The father and mother are comically absent-minded; the daughter, who has come to paint them, is giddy and hysterical; the early events amuse us with the way Dad wears his overcoat and three scarves inside the house ("Gee, it's hot in here") and tries to talk with his mouth stuffed with saltines.

In the second act, the play turns darker, as we discover that Father suffers from senility and incontinence, and Mother harbors recriminations over her daughter's selfish failure to recognize his condition or share responsibility for it (you may remember Linda Loman charging Biff and Happy with similar failures in regard to Willy), but by this time it's a little late to instill a somber mood—especially when the playwright is more concerned with getting the parents to accept their daughter than with depicting their bleak future once they move to Cotuit. Donald Moffat, Marian Seldes, and Frances Conroy play these parts with growing commitment and convincing Back Bay accents, but they sometimes seem as undecided as Miss Howe about the tone and nature of the play.

GEOGRAPHER OF THE SELF

The Complete Poems 1927-1979 by Elizabeth Bishop

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 287 pp., $17.50)

The eerie clarity and brilliant surfaces of Elizabeth Bishop's work have always been easy to see. Her first book, *North and South* (1946), contained poems that have been widely memorized, imitated, turned to as antidotes for slackness, and anthologized: "Wading at Wellfleet," "The Man-Moth," "The Monument," "Florida," "Roosters," and "The Fish" are among these early poems—not bad for a first book.

But though the achievement and the reputation increased with the publication of *A Cold Spring* (1955, Pulitzer Prize), *Questions of Travel* (1965), and *Complete Poems* (1969, National Book Award), the whole force and unique daring of Bishop's poetry may not have been visible until her last book before her death in 1979, *Geography III* (1976). In the light of that book, all of her work seemed to change. The poet who might have seemed lapidary and self-effacing emerged as a radical explorer of selfhood's very nature. Critics like Helen Vendler and Harold Bloom, and fellow artists like John Ashbery, have begun to show us the nature of Bishop's accomplishment.

Now, *The Complete Poems, 1927-1979*, including translations, uncollected poems, juvenilia, and occasional verses as well as a small number of new poems, shows the magnitude of this immensely readable, yet somehow oblique and elusive poet. It is an exciting, challenging corpus. Within her limitations—she was not prolific, she lacks boldness of scale—Bishop is original without the obvious rhetorical noises that sometimes pass for profundity.

Bishop is a lyric poet of solipsism yearning toward love, of metaphysical doubt acknowledging worldly charm and variety. But her isolated self is too proud to strut; and her doubt is too gravely absolute for certain heroic or Whitmanian manners. On the rare occasions when she reaches for the high style, the grandeur is based on a negative assertion, as in the conclusion of "At the Fishhouses," where the water is

> Cold dark deep and absolutely clear,
> element bearable to no mortal.

The negative assertion, moreover, is tempered by the provisional counter-

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point of supposition and simile, which further qualifies the sublime, limiting how much can be known even of the familiar:

I have seen it over and over, the same sea, the same,
slightly, indifferently swinging above the stones,
icily free above the stones,
above the stones and then the world.
If you should dip your hand in,
your wrist would ache immediately,
your bones would begin to ache
and your hand would burn
as if the water were a transmutation of fire
that feeds on stones and burns with a dark gray flame.
If you tasted it, it would first taste bitter,
then briny, then surely burn your tongue.
It is like what we imagine knowledge to be:
dark, salt, clear, moving, utterly free,
drawn from the cold hard mouth
of the world, derived from the rocky breasts
forever, flowing and drawn, and since
our knowledge is historical, flowing, and flown.

It is *like* what we *imagine* knowledge to be. The simile and (as Jane Shore has pointed out) the qualifying adverb ("then *surely* burn your tongue") are hallmarks of Bishop's style and outlook. She reminds us that she is making or positing connections between separate things, so that we may even notice the idea of "mediation" in the hypothetical "immediate" ache of the wrist. A steady fury with the very idea of falsehood leads her to make every connection explicitly an invention, and her own invention. That a person can be known, or the intensely visible world understood, is always left partly in doubt.

Thus, the poet of gaiety and reticence also denies—all but arrogantly—that one person is likely to know another, or indeed that one particle of experience is more than provisionally linked to any other: "Everything only connected by 'and' and 'and.' " The line is from "Over 2,000 Illustrations and a Complete Concordance," whose travelers to the Holy Land and elsewhere witness a dazzling, sinister catalog of contingent sights: collegians "like ants" marching through St. Peter's square, the jukebox that went on playing "Ay Jalisco," the beautiful poppies splitting the mosaics at Volubilis, where "the fat old guide made eyes," the "little pockmarked prostitutes" of Marrakesh who "flung themselves / naked and giggling against our knees, / asking for cigarettes." Then:

it was somewhere near there
I saw what frightened me most of all:

TORN PAPER COLLAGE OF ELIZABETH BISHOP BY RALPH HAMILTON. PRIVATE COLLECTION, HOUSTON.

A holy grave, not looking particularly holy,
one of a group under a keyhole-arched stone baldaquin
open to every wind from the pink desert.
An open, gritty marble trough, carved solid
with exhortation, yellowed
as scattered cattle-teeth;
half-filled with dust, not even the dust
of the poor prophet paynim who once lay there.
In a smart burnoose Khadour looked on amused.

Everything only connected by "and" and "and."

Open the book. (The gilt rubs off the edges
of the pages and pollinates the fingertips.)
Open the heavy book. Why couldn't we have seen
this old Nativity while we were at it?
—the dark ajar, the rocks breaking with light,
an undisturbed, unbreathing flame,
colorless, sparkles on straw,
and, lulled within, a family with pets,
—and looked and looked our infant sight away.

The nightmare of the dust-filled grave is not merely of death, nor even of nothingness, but rather of meaningless, accumulated particles, casually tangent. The clear sight that witnesses these separate particles cannot see the mysterious, meaningful, and capitalized birth, nor can it "look itself away." The use of "infant" in its original sense—"unable to speak"—precisely underscores how incapable mere sight truly is: it can record only those tangent particulars. That is why the hesitation of simile concedes a harsher, more strictly limited truth than the magical confidence of metaphor. Simile, unlike metaphor, makes the concession that no resemblance is absolute.

Nothing is more conventional in modern poetry than the valuing of metaphor above simile. The stark, unostentatious way Bishop's work reverses that convention is characteristic; she is too sure and proud to explain or to show off—partly because what she is sure of is the limitation, as of simile. The reader is free to misunderstand, or not, but italicizing rhetoric or self-explication will not be provided. Similarly, it is possible to make the false assumption that she describes the separate parts of the world, the sensory particulars, out of love for those physical details. But in fact, *The Complete Poems 1927-1979* records at least as much rage as love toward that merely visible, carefully recorded array of distinct things. That is, for all the pleasure of the eye, the poet's drama also includes the mind separating itself from the sensible world that nearly drowns the individual—as in the

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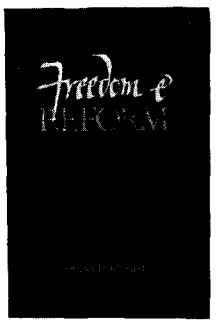

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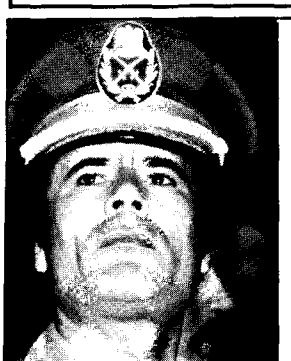

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LIBYAN SANDSTORM

The Complete Account of Qaddafi's Revolution
by John K. Cooley

A New Republic Book • Holt, Rinehart and Winston

dizziness of "In the Waiting Room"—and the mind separates itself by seeing and naming all that is not itself. The extraordinary power of sight yearns to "look itself away." Each acute observation or similitude that the self makes as it regards the world is also a defiant, negative definition of one's own boundaries.

In *Geography III*, her last work except for the four poems published after the book appeared, the separate self is associated with the figure of the island. In "Crusoe in England" the speaker has the nightmare of imagining all the other separate imaginations, each isolated subjectivity demanding the impossible, to be known:

> I'd have
> nightmares of other islands
> stretching away from mine, infinities
> of islands, islands spawning islands,
> like frogs' eggs turning into polliwogs
> of islands, knowing that I had to live
> on each and every one, eventually,
> for ages, registering their flora,
> their fauna, their geography.

Along with the other allegorized geographical feature of the volcano—the essential Bishop totem, molten rock pushed up from under the seemingly still surface—islands embody something in the poet's nature that is not merely pessimistic and enclosed, but antisocial. (The lines preceding the ones I've quoted narrate Crusoe's dream of slitting a baby's throat.) But even the lines about islands express the opposed, charitable and social side of the poet, and bring to mind the fact that—beside all that I have said—she is also a love poet ("Casabianca," "Chemin de Fer," "Insomnia," "One Art") and a poet of funny, charitable social comedy ("Filling Station," "Manners," "Letter to N.Y.," "House Guest," "12 O'Clock News"). I don't think any modern poet of her stature has a better sense of humor.

IF THE RETICENCE of simile and the isolated, volcanic island suggest Bishop's philosophical orientation, her social person is represented by quite different aspects of her writing. The poems often give a mysterious glamor and sweetness to the ordinary and domestic (the almost Norman Rockwell quality of people saying goodbye at a bus stop while "a collie supervises") in a way that suggests a feeling of being ineffably an outsider, a tourist from some other

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star, in relation to the banal customs of middle-class life. (Vendler has described the poet's sensitive, rapid oscillation between "the domestic and the otherworldly.")

The feeling is expressed by noticing, amid the bleached, salt landscape of "The Moose," the woman who "shakes a tablecloth / out after supper," and by the many times when language is allowed to pour bizarrely over the quotidian: the man in "Cape Breton," for example, who climbs a stile, carrying a baby, and crosses a meadow to "his invisible house beside the water." Sometimes this peculiar quality is largely an effect of sound, rather than diction, as in the line (quoted earlier) "In a smart burnoose Khadour looked on amused," where having three iambic words with similar vowels coincide with three iambic feet, two of them adjacent, produces a reggae-like effect of reverse syncopation. Sometimes the effect is of diction and sound both:

> The giant with the stammer
> was the landlady's son,
> grumbling on the stairs
> over an old grammar.
>
> He was morose,
> but she was cheerful.
> The bedroom was cold,
> the feather bed close.
>
> ("A Summer's Dream")

Her last published poem, "Sonnet," conveys in its conceits this aura of the familiar transfigured: the bubble in the spirit level, the caught needle wobbling in the compass, the freed mercury running from the broken thermometer, the "rainbow-bird" of light cast flying by the bevel of a—characteristically—empty mirror.

The peculiar nature of Bishop's version of a Romantic theme—the self isolated in a world unlike it—was clarified by *Geography III*. That book might be described as the autobiographical writing of a nonautobiographical writer; it hovers near personal account without entering the terrain of memoir—much less "confession"—for very long. Yet it is entirely intimate and inward. Reviewing the book for TNR (February 5, 1977), Harold Bloom wrote:

> Of her own generation of poets, which included Roethke, Lowell, Berryman, and Jarrell, Bishop alone seems beyond dispute. As contemporaries, we may over-esteem the others, but Bishop's art is as unmistakable in its authority as the poetry of Wallace Stevens and Marianne Moore demonstrated itself to be, at an earlier time.

Scanning the entire career in *The Complete Poems 1927-1979*, I find Bloom's judgment to be emphatically confirmed.

His context for comparison raises another thought. Recent biographies of Delmore Schwartz and Lowell, and Eileen Simpson's *Poets In Their Youth*, call attention to the stereotype of the greedy, flamboyant, competitive, and egocentric poet, and the sometimes terrible effect of that stereotype on a generation of poets. In different ways, it had some force in their minds, in the minds of those who perceived them,

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and even in their work. But here is a poet whose subject was the self, and whose work, on the level of personality, takes that self (in a way) for granted, without a moment of extraneous self-regard or anxious preening. I don't mean to insult the memories of the other poets, but to think about a poetic tradition. Much of what readers love in English-language poetry began in the elaborate seduction poetry of the sixteenth century, in which the poet displayed the eloquence that might both win his beloved and preserve her (or him) for the ages, defying time. This sonneteer's self-admiration continues, possibly, even into such charming modern poems of personality as the one in which William Carlos Williams dances before the mirror naked while his family sleeps, twirling a shirt over his head: "who shall say," he asks, "that I am not the happy genius of my household?" It seems at least worth musing about whether Elizabeth Bishop's distinctive voice and material come partly from her ability to walk into the territory of the self and its ways with no least nuance of the peacock's strut.

Some readers will feel that the publishers should not have included the occasional poems, or the poems composed at the age of sixteen, though very few readers will resist reading them. (There is a spark in every one of them.) The volume also contains at least one extremely good previously "lost" poem, "Pleasure Seas." The book is completely and unfussily beautiful in typography and design, as is fitting. The jacket design uses a watercolor drawn by Elizabeth Bishop in Mexico in 1942. It is a light-hearted view of houses and windmills from a balcony, including the twin spires of a church, a water tower, palm trees, and what appear to be telephone poles. The perspective is from an angle of about forty-five degrees to the balcony railing in the foreground, and close to it, as if the artist and her pad were nearly there in the picture itself.

ROBERT PINSKY

UNRECONSTRUCTED AMERICAN

The Forties: From Notebooks and Diaries of the Period by Edmund Wilson edited by Leon Edel

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 416 pp., $17.95)

The further Edmund Wilson recedes into literary history the more unlikely he seems. Consider what an anomaly he'd appear today: a genuine person of letters fully occupied in reading, thinking, and writing about literature and ideas, not just surviving without "institutional connection" and "advanced degrees" but flourishing without them. And dealing not just with the flux of current books, like a reviewer, but, impelled by curiosity, independent learning, and a lively historical sense, turning frequently to reconsider past masterpieces. And furthermore, doing this for a slick-magazine audience in a prose unbesotted by the adjacent ads for gents' Ivy clothes, ladies' bijous, and posh resorts. And not sticking to American writing but looking again, as Wilson did in the 1940s alone, at Shakespeare, Johnson, Austen, Peacock, Thackeray, Gogol, Baudelaire, Shaw, Wilde, and Joyce. Where is his equivalent now? Who could be nominated as the current literary conscience of the United States? Alfred Kazin, perhaps. Irving Howe, sometimes. Diana Trilling, too rarely. But names like those emphasize Wilson's special identity. He was that rare animal in the late-twentieth-century Northeast, a goyish literary and political intellectual, with his WASPhood in no way compromised or perverted by the standard WASP gentility or narrowness. A rare creature indeed, and how we need his mental stamina and curiosity now.

But it's not literary stuff that comprises this new volume—Wilson's essays and reviews of the 1940s were collected in *Classics and Commercials* thirty-three years ago. What we have here is an accumulation of miscellaneous papers, journals, notes, and first drafts brought together by Leon Edel, who in his introduction ("Edmund Wilson in Middle Age") tries to elicit a unifying theme from these very mixed materials—the theme of Wilson's combat with a (cliché) "middle-age crisis." But shreds and patches don't unify so easily, and the reader is left with an impression of a restless but intense miscellaneousness, a decade's precipitate from the always-inquiring mind of an exemplary nonspecialist.

DATING FROM approximately Wilson's 45th to his 55th year, the materials are arranged chronologically, beginning with some notes for *The Wound and the Bow* (1941) and ending with the notes ultimately promoted into the Haiti section of *Red, Black, Brown, and Olive* (1956), first published in *The Reporter* in 1950. In between, the reader encounters tiny but bright notes on American literature and plans rather too schematic for a novel Wilson (providentially, in my view) never wrote. There are lots of jottings attesting to his acute visual and physical sensitivity—to the look of the ponds at Cape Cod, the appearance of the ancient claw-footed bathtubs in the old Princeton Club of New York City, the uncivil entrance-way to Carnegie Hall:

> Steps go up steeply from street to heavy glass door that is hard to open and swings out so as to embarrass your entrance and press back those who are coming behind you. . . .

There are some acute perceptions about the way the airplane belittles all that is visible below it, formerly impressive palaces and cathedrals especially, gravely diminishing human dignity thereby. One would imagine that in the early 1940s Wilson would have been much concerned with the war, but no: he hardly notices it, and when he does it's largely to deplore the universal practice of "area" (that is, indiscriminate civilian) bombing. On July 18, 1944, there's no interest in the battle for Normandy, about to burst out from St.Lo, but only a gentle rumination about what life used to be like in Red Bank, New Jersey. Then there are lively postwar travel notes, developed later into *Europe Without Baedeker* (1947),

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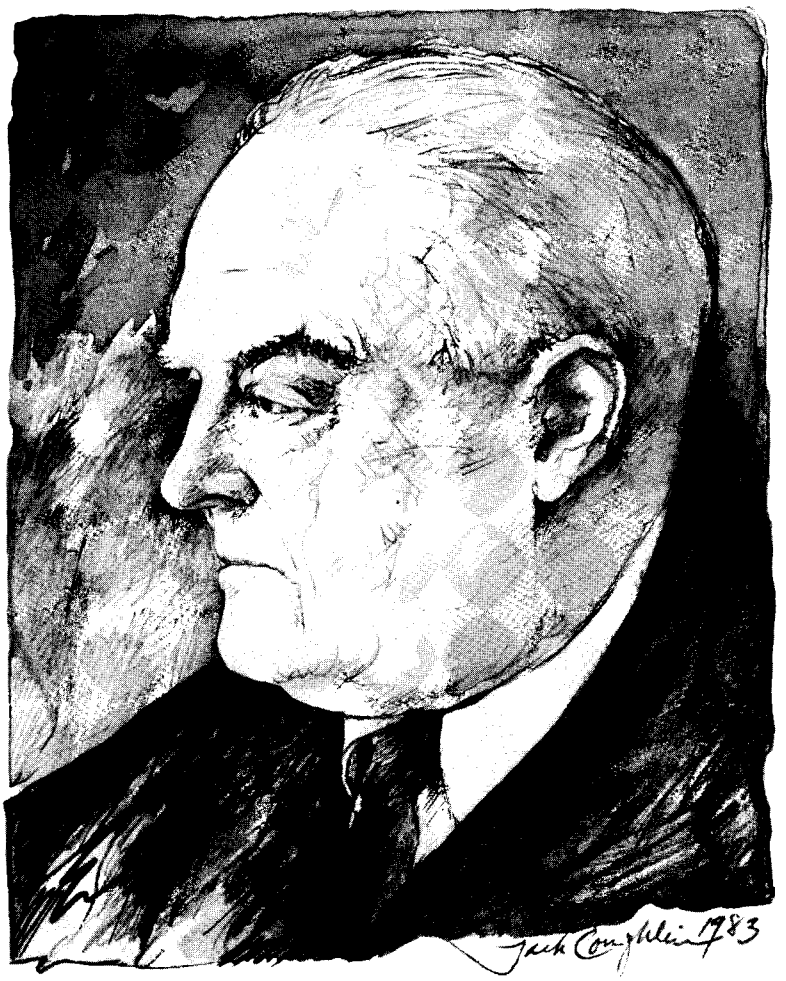
notations on appearances and conditions in Naples, Milan, and Rome, and a visit to the wartime Roman, George Santayana; the look of things in postwar Greece; the shriveling of the human spirit in London; the ghastliness of Florida and "fresh and futile" California, as well as politics, people, art, and nature in Nevada, Virginia, Haiti, and the Zuñi country of New Mexico. There are plans for unwritten short stories—all based too firmly on actual occurrences to have been, perhaps, very good; nice character sketches of Felix Frankfurter and Evelyn Waugh, William Barrett (of *Partisan Review*, encountered in postwar Italy) and C. M. Bowra of Wadham College, John Dos Passos and the formerly beloved Edna St. Vincent Millay, met again after nineteen years ("She had changed terribly . . . her old tension had turned into a form of the shakes. I thought that she showed badly the effects of drinking. Her hands shook and her mouth and chin flapped like an old woman's"). During the 1940s Wilson was prosecuting his love affair with Elena Mumm Thornton, and there are some sexy but not undignified private notes recording memorable erotic moments with her. In these journals, Wilson observes, "I am constantly writing about death, illness, and decay of old friends," and to a degree that's true, what with the deaths of Fitzgerald and John Peale Bishop and other college friends. But that's not the whole story of the decade, and many of Wilson's notes effuse a wicked, clear-sighted humor and an admirable optimism, as well as deep psychic and physical satisfaction. He is too complicated to be comprehended in a summary sentence, even one of his own.



EDMUND WILSON BY JACK COUGHLIN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

As these papers indicate everywhere, Wilson is close to being the archetypal unreconstructed American, and you might have to go back to Mencken or even Mark Twain to find so pure a specimen. We can suspect that he's so little interested in World War II because it's being fought outside the boundaries of the United States. Or perhaps he chose not to notice it because America's effort there could be conceived as assisting the British, whom he despises with a truly nineteenth-century small-town American vigor. Albion is taxed with a wholly inappropriate condescension and with fraud as well. Even the gold medal a British philosophical society once awarded Santayana, Wilson delights to notice, proves nothing but lead, gilded. (A fact more important to Wilson than that Santayana discovered the sham when he felt moved to donate the medal to Mussolini's treasury.) An innocence very much in the American grain prompts Wilson's shock when he hears that we have emulated the Germans in developing our own kind of cruel, emasculating antipersonnel mines. The domination of Europe by small nationalisms and pride appalls him—why don't they learn from the example of the New World how to federalize and manage their affairs sensibly? But it's the British who annoy him especially, and no perfidy or airy carelessness or discourtesy of theirs goes unremarked. On Crete, told about the brilliant wartime kidnapping of the German General Kreipe by three larking young British officers, he is careful to note the reprisal, which occurred after the lighthearted Oxbridge lads had gone with their prize and which is seldom mentioned in British accounts of the deed: "Thirty-four men killed when Germans destroyed town."

If many of his reactions arise from an American innocence constantly astonished by the world's wickedness and irrationalism, many also arise from a quality not often associated with that kind of innocence, high intelligence. Intelligent himself, Wilson feels no compunction invoking *intelligent* and *intelligence* as critical gauges and bringing them to bear without either cynicism or superstition. Implicit in his criticism, of doors in public places as well as of books and attitudes and policies, is the conviction, most welcome today, that it's unlikely that anything interesting or civilized will issue without being propelled by high intelligence. A model democrat, he agitates unceasingly for excellence and distinction. It's a pity his emphasis on intelligence hasn't been worked by critics into a scheme of ready classification, by which one could arrange authors not by the pretentions of their genres or their Classicism or Romanticism or Modernism but by their intelligence, thus:

Highly Intelligent: Austen, Joyce, George Eliot, Sir Philip Sidney

Fairly Intelligent: Wordsworth, Boswell, Matthew Arnold, Carlyle

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Dumb: Sir Walter Scott, John Steinbeck, Carl Sandburg, Lawrence Durrell

Despite the interest of much of this material, the collection as a whole is scrappy, gathering too many drafts of work already published in more presentable form. And unfortunately, Leon Edel's editing is short of distinguished. The annotation seems to have someone odd in mind, someone who knows all about Leopardi's being imprisoned by his father, but has to be informed who Malraux is. And surely Edel is wrong in his explanation of the "W" graffito, the interlocked "V's" signifying *Viva!* in Latin countries. Annotating "W Lenin," seen on an Italian wall, he notes: "The postwar double-V graffiti of the Left proclaiming victory." Wrong on almost all possible counts: not Victory, but Three Cheers For, or Up With; not just postwar, but traditional; not plural but singular; and not just Left but Right as well—I've seen *W Il Duce* and *W Il Re*.

But this sort of editorial bumbling can't make Wilson a less interesting or valuable exemplar of a mind engaged in understanding and evaluating. Back in the 1940s Howard Mumford Jones called him "the best balanced critic of our day." He meant that Wilson wasn't so bemused by the theory of literature as not to notice constantly what was enacting before his eyes, in life as well as in books. Thus, in 1945, he wrote Nabokov that "the general state of the world has been so discouraging for what used to be called the humanities." On that score he wouldn't be any happier now, although as ever he'd be curious about visiting places like Zuñi country and admiring the dancers there who "represent the backbone of the community and keep it up to its standards."

PAUL FUSSELL

STORIES WITHIN STORIES

Ararat
by D. M. Thomas

(Viking, 192 pp., $13.50)

To follow the plot of D. M. Thomas's fourth novel—his first since *The White Hotel* caused such a stir in this country—you have to diagram it. This is not a figurative statement. There's simply no other way to keep track of the book's twists and loops, its stories within stories.

And obviously, the diagram can't be an ordinary hill-and-valley system such as those our English teachers used to demonstrate on the blackboard, with a straight line rising to the climax and falling away. No one straight line is going to do it. This would have to be more of an accountant's approach, with each story assigned to its own separate column.

In the first column, a Russian poet named Rozanov is telling a story to a blind woman. He describes three writers—a Russian, an Armenian, and an American of Armenian descent—who agree to improvise a story upon a common theme. These three form the second column.

In the third column, the hero of one of these improvisations, a Russian poet named Surkov who is traveling by ship to America, falls ill and imagines a scene (this is the fourth column) in which he is Pushkin, writing "Egyptian Nights"—a real piece, never finished. "Egyptian Nights" is the fifth column; it's Pushkin's tale about a Russian poet named Charsky who arranges for a talented Italian improviser to give a reading to his friends.

At the point where the Pushkin piece breaks off, we're returned to Surkov, of column three, who writes two possible endings for it. Then we find that Surkov is not on a ship after all; that he's come to America by plane and all that happened on shipboard was something he dreamed. So the plane-flying Surkov, the real one, might arguably fall into column six; although some might feel more comfortable keeping him in column three with the dream Surkov on shipboard. Whatever you prefer.

Then one of the three writers (column two) who agreed to improvise on a common theme compliments another upon his story about Surkov (columns three and six, or maybe just three, depending on which you decided you preferred). And finally, the blind woman compliments Rozanov on *his* story (remember Rozanov and the blind woman, back in column one?), and that's the end of the book.

Naturally you have followed all this.

Well, let's try another approach. View the novel as a series of indented paragraphs, each indentation another story. The plot would form a design, then, something like an irregular arrow pointing to the right: traveling deeper and deeper into the interior stories, then slowly backing away again till we're returned to the outermost layer, the first story.

It's not really necessary, of course, for a reviewer to make the plot entirely clear to prospective readers. But in *Ararat*, the whole point is the plot—its devilish cleverness, or its maddening obscurity, however you choose to view it. In any case, it's not an honest plot. If a contract exists between writer and reader that the writer will do his best to draw the reader in and the reader will do his best to follow, D. M. Thomas reneged on his part of the deal. To be fair, he didn't even agree to make the deal. He blurs events—the whole point is their blurring—and he swerves and doubles back in hope of losing us. And if we hang on, against all odds, and stick with his tale to the end, we're not rewarded with the final "Ah, now I see!" that would have made the hanging on worthwhile.

The central male figures of these stories—even Pushkin (but not Pushkin's hero, Charsky, who after all has been created by a different author)—tend to melt together; no distinction is made between their various personalities. In fact, there's a deliberate attempt to merge them, to imply that these are really inner chambers of one and the same man. All of them are self-centered, self-indulgent, and unlikable. Rozanov is sleeping with the blind woman because "he had never slept with a blind woman," but he's disgusted by her thin legs and her "wandering, unattached pupils." The dream Surkov deflowers a childish little Polish gymnast and then feels oppressed by her ("I burn up women as a marathon runner burns up his flesh," he says), and the real-life Surkov, who shares

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Rozanov's distaste for thin legs, has the same attitude of conquest toward all the women he meets. Even the Armenian of column two, while a gentler man than the others, cannot function sexually until his partner has bitten his hand to draw blood and he has called her a "foul name." In general, sex on these pages is violent, unloving, and unpleasant.

The book's effect, a publisher's blurb tells us, is that of opening one of those little Russian dolls and finding other dolls inside. But it's not, exactly. The dolls inside those Russian dolls are different from each other, each with its own unique little face and costume. The dolls inside this novel are indistinguishable. Evidently the point is that there is no true invention in storytelling. Willy-nilly, the narrator passes his own traits and prejudices on to his characters; his characters are inextricable from him.

Ararat takes its title from its preoccupation with the Armenian diaspora of 1915. The shipboard Surkov, the one of the dream, is followed about by an old man who compulsively relates all the atrocities he has committed in his lifetime—or in several lifetimes, perhaps, for what he's describing is every instance of mass brutality that occurred during the twentieth century. ("I've never truly retired," he sighs. "One becomes indispensable. Or at least one thinks one does.") Special emphasis, however, is placed upon the Armenian events, and it's a mark of this book's strangeness that these horrors—chillingly, meticulously described—fill the only scenes in this book where there's the slightest bit of humor. If humor is what you want to call it.

The old man's appalling coolness as he catalogs his crimes is in itself funny, in a dreadful way. ". . . altogether there has been great exaggeration of the numbers killed," he says. "It is certain that no more than a million were killed." He disapproves of the gypsies' "unseemly" manner of dying at Babi Yar; the Jews, he says, were much more dignified. At Dachau and Birkenau, "It was not easy. People think it all worked like a well-oiled machine, but it wasn't like that. The system was often on the point of collapsing." And after describing the murder of 17,000 Armenians at Trebizond and 18,000 at Kharput:

> 'Am I boring you?' he asked; for he had seen me glance at my watch. I explained that I was trying to cut down my smoking, and rationing myself to one every

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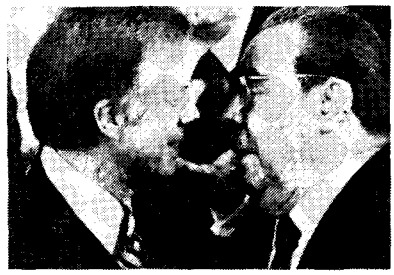

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DANGEROUS RELATIONS

The Soviet Union in World Politics, 1970-1982

by Adam B. Ulam

Author of *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917-1973.*

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half an hour. But it was very difficult. 'I know,' he said. 'I gave up smoking ten years ago, but I still dream now and then of smoking a cigarette. It's a dreadful addiction.'

In *The White Hotel*, the account of the Nazi atrocities appeared to have some point; everything led up to it, and there was a moment where the reader heard that satisfying click of things coming together. *The White Hotel* was disturbing to read, but one felt it was necessarily disturbing. *Ararat* disturbs without purpose. The Armenian tragedy is merely one more quirky scene in a book that's full of quirky scenes.

Finally, *Ararat* lacks power. It seems almost to be consciously undermining its power—breaking off each narrative sweep the moment we're caught up in it, beaching us once again, leaving us looking around in bewilderment. Books are meant to carry us to other lives, I figure. When a book drives its readers to diagraming the plot, you know it's not going to carry you very far.

ANNE TYLER

ASSESSING DÉTENTE

Dangerous Relations: The Soviet Union in World Politics, 1970-82 by Adam B. Ulam

(Oxford University Press, 325 pp., $25)

Among the numerous analyses of Soviet foreign policy that have appeared since 1945, Adam Ulam's *Expansion and Coexistence* and *The Rivals* have stood out for their originality and perception. Ulam has steadfastly resisted the classic temptations of Sovietologists: either to assume from the start that the Soviets are insatiable ideologues who will never settle for less than world rule, or conversely to argue that they are really "just like us," ready to become responsible and cooperative members of the world community if only their legitimate interests are respected. To him they are hardened realists, respectful of power and deeply distrustful of idealism; their Communist ideology has become in some respects a burden, but they cannot abandon it. Humor and breadth of vision have also distinguished Ulam's work; what other scholar would make a point about Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Party Congress by quoting the "American philosopher and sports figure," Satchel Paige? *The Rivals*—a neglected classic on the cold war whose argument is summarized in the opening chapter of *Dangerous Relations*—tells a story of missed opportunities, continually bemoaning the West's inability to bring its enormous power to bear upon Moscow or to recognize the Soviets' periodic willingness to negotiate on important issues. *Dangerous Relations* continues Ulam's history of Soviet-American relations. It too shows how much can be learned about Soviet behavior by combining a painstaking examination of *Pravda* and other published sources with a healthy measure of intuition and common sense.

Three themes dominate the book: the changing preoccupations of the Soviet leadership, the gains and losses of détente, and the significance of recent Soviet advances in the third world. Although as we shall see Ulam regards the Soviet leaders as prisoners of an expansionist dynamic that they cannot escape, he does not believe that they seek world rule or that they regard nuclear war as a rational means of extending their power. Fear remains the key to their policies. From the late 1940s until at least the mid-1960s their principal fears focused on West Germany, and Ulam argues that they would have given much either to prevent the formation of that state, or to stop its conventional rearmament, or to make sure that it would never obtain nuclear weapons. But the West never tried to use these Soviet fears to weaken Soviet influence in Central and Eastern Europe, and in the wake of Willy Brandt's Ostpolitik the Kremlin has concluded that neither West Germany nor the United States represents a significant military threat. The major threats to Moscow now come from within the Communist world. They include ideological rebellion within Western European Communist parties, challenges to Soviet rule in Eastern Europe exemplified by Solidarity, the sluggish and corrupt Soviet economy, and most of all China, whose military power is bound to increase and whose antagonism toward the Soviets Ulam regards as an almost immutable aspect of the world scene.

Ulam sees gains and losses for both sides in the brief history of détente. Détente with the United States has not given the Soviets their most cherished goal: real security against China and the Chinese nuclear threat. During the SALT talks American negotiators never acted on hints that Soviet-American arms treaties should include provisions for cooperation against a third nuclear power, and U.S.-China relations have until recently continued to improve. But détente has brought Moscow considerable economic benefits, including Western European economic help for the Soviet bloc and American grain sales. The recognition of Soviet nuclear equality (and in some areas superiority) in SALT I, Ulam argues, also increased Soviet leverage over Western Europe; he does not think the treaty gave Moscow any vital military advantages, but considers it a psychological blunder for the United States to have conceded the Soviets numerical superiority in certain categories of weapons. In his eyes, it is mainly because the West has not set the price of continuing détente high enough that the Soviets have failed to moderate their behavior around the world. Still, he thinks, détente has served Western interests. Even the somewhat hypocritical human rights provisions of the 1975 Helsinki agreement have been a significant diplomatic and propaganda embarrassment to the Russians, and they probably contributed a good deal to the emergence of the Solidarity movement in Poland. Ulam clearly feels that some form of détente should continue.

Ulam is most concerned with Soviet behavior in the third world, where Moscow became considerably more active under Brezhnev. Expansion, he argues, reflects the needs of the Soviet leadership.

> The regime believes that its internal security is inextricably bound up with the advance of its external power and authority . . . . With the country's mounting so-

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cial and economic problems, with the ideology itself having become discredited or irrelevant insofar as the great mass of the Soviet people is concerned, the regime strives to demonstrate its viability and dynamism through foreign expansion.

The 1970s were rich in Soviet successes. With the help of Cuba, North Vietnam, and the impotence of the West, Angola, Ethiopia, South Yemen, South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and (briefly) Afghanistan were added to "the socialist community" at virtually no cost to the Soviet Union. Moscow has also had to deal with some intensely frustrating setbacks, especially in the Middle East, but Ulam clearly believes that something must be done to stop their advance in the third world.

Dangerous Relations, like *The Rivals*, reflects poorly upon American leaders, none of whom in the author's opinion have ever consistently demonstrated the patience, courage, and singleness of purpose necessary to deal effectively with Moscow. Frequently sheer inadvertence has cost Washington dearly. Thus at the end of 1978 the SALT II treaty was ready for signature when the Carter Administration, apparently without considering Moscow's probable reaction, announced the normalization of relations with China. The signature of the treaty and the beginning of the ratification process were delayed for six months with fateful consequences. Ulam takes the Reagan Administration to task for failing to take up a wide-ranging Soviet initiative shortly after it took office, or to call for multilateral talks on the Polish economy before the imposition of martial law. American policy in the third world also comes in for criticism; Moscow, Ulam feels, has proven a more reliable and effective supporter of its third world clients than Washington.

THE WORTH of Ulam's criticisms is undeniable, but it is still possible to reach the end of *Dangerous Relations* with a somewhat more sanguine view of the West's prospects. In the third world, as the author notes himself, Soviet expansionism will always encounter an insoluble dilemma. The Soviet connection appeals to many third world regimes whose leaders, like the Soviets, sense the essential weakness of their domestic position and must rely on repression and force to seize and hold power. Yet paradoxically, as soon as a stronger and more stable regime evolves in an emerging nation—be it Communist or non-Communist—it rebels against Soviet patronage and turns the tables on its protector. Again and again this has happened—in Yugoslavia and Egypt, to a smaller but observable extent in Rumania and Hungary, and above all, of course, in China. In the long run Moscow's only reliable friends are governments that depend on Soviet troops to stay in power (East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia) or that are threatened by overwhelmingly powerful neighbors (Cuba, North Vietnam, Syria). The value of such allies is highly debatable. In Afghanistan the Soviets are discovering the impossibility of using military force to achieve political goals in a highly traditional third world nation. And the West's third world losses do not always translate into Moscow's gains. Ulam shows that despite Khomeini's anti-American rhetoric, his policies show that he knows from which superpower Iran has more to fear. One could easily argue that Soviet foreign policy in the 1970s strikingly resembles American policy in the years 1950-1965. Shaken by the "loss of China" and worried by new threats to its position, Moscow has embarked on a massive military buildup, encouraged coups and established bases in remote regions, showed a new willingness to defend its interests by force, and finally found itself in a war that it can neither continue nor abandon without substantial losses in prestige.

Furthermore, while the contrast between the eternal vigilance of the Kremlin and the bumbling confusion of Western leaders is real enough, it is arguable that it simply reflects the West's much greater security and strength. The Soviets' posture reflects their history. Unable to create true Socialism or Communism in Russia, they have for sixty-five years maintained themselves in power through ceaseless watchfulness and repression. The realism, cynicism, and cunning bred by such an experience undoubtedly make the Soviet leaders skilled diplomatic practitioners, but can these qualities compensate for the endemic weaknesses of the political and economic system within which they have to operate? The West, by contrast, is indolent because it can afford to

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be. The economic power of the anti-Soviet camp dwarfs that of the Communist states, and it must never be forgotten that it is the West's industry that gives the oil and other resources of the third world their value. While Western political and social structures have hardly been disturbed even by a very severe recession, in Poland the Solidarity movement was ignited by the interruption of a modest *rise* in living standards. And while the idealism of Western people and statesmen can be a handicap in international politics, it also reflects a commitment to a better world without which true progress cannot take place.

Certainly, as Ulam suggests, the West should exact a higher price for continuing détente. Our price for the recognition of the postwar European settlement at Helsinki should have been a large mutual reduction in conventional and nuclear forces on the European continent. Washington could indeed use the threat of American nuclear rearmament to secure a better agreement on strategic arms. And perhaps we could develop a more effective policy toward the third world—or at least a more consistent one. Still, we are not in danger of imminent demise. The West will surely survive even the missed opportunities of the Reagan Administration, which despite its blustery rhetoric and massive arms buildup shows no signs of adopting the policy of prudent realism that Ulam has been brilliantly and vainly advocating for so long.

DAVID E. KAISER

David E. Kaiser teaches history at Carnegie-Mellon University. He is the author of *Economic Diplomacy and the Origins of the Second World War* (Princeton University Press).

A POSITIVIST FANTASY

Fury on Earth: A Biography of Wilhelm Reich by Myron Sharaf

(St. Martin's Press, 550 pp., $24.95)

On November 3, 1957, Wilhelm Reich died in the federal penitentiary at Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, where he had served eight months of a two-year sentence for marketing a fraudulent therapeutic device, the Orgone Energy Accumulator. Thus ended one of the century's most improbable careers, which took its protagonist from psychoanalysis, through Marxism, to, finally, "scientific" orgonomy. Myron Sharaf has now charted that career in more detail and with greater fair-mindedness than one ever hoped to witness.

Some readers may be disconcerted by Sharaf's overestimation of Reich's stature. There is much talk here of his "soaring intellect" and of "the magnitude of his accomplishments." For ten years, from 1944 to 1954, Sharaf was a close associate of Reich's, first as student, then as patient, and ultimately as his assistant. He tells us that he believes firmly in Reich's discovery of "orgastic potency," because he has experienced the "currents" himself, and no amount of evidence or argument to the contrary will ever persuade him that they don't exist. He early conceived the task of becoming, in his words, the "historian of orgonomy," for which he began taking notes nearly forty years ago. One is somewhat nonplussed to learn that Sharaf's wife had an affair with Reich during the years of his apprenticeship—indeed, that she actually left Sharaf for Reich. The biography, one almost feels, is a monument to selflessness, although there are times when, in detailing Reich's faults, Sharaf seems to be revenging himself, if ever so gently.

Fury on Earth is an excellent book primarily because of its respect for certain old-fashioned scholarly virtues. The most important of these is sheer empirical industry. Sharaf has labored indefatigably gathering and verifying facts about Reich's life. Several people have written about Reich's ideas, and a few have written about aspects of his career (notably Jerome Greenfield, whose *Wilhelm Reich Vs. the U.S.A.* treats Reich's confrontation with the Food and Drug Administration). But Sharaf is the first to tell the full biographical story in anything approaching satisfactory fashion. One is especially grateful for the wealth of information he has turned up about Reich's personal life, his relations with colleagues, and his everyday existence.

The book is also remarkably judicious in its assessment of the people who figured prominently in Reich's saga. Reich himself was a great hater, and once someone had crossed him, he lost any capacity for objectivity. Sharaf, however, is able to see his subject as he was seen by others—by wives, lovers, children, friends, and enemies. He is entirely fair, for example, in his account of Freud's relationship with Reich, stressing the extent to which Freud indulged Reich even after other members of the psychoanalytic establishment had written him off as a psychopath. The same empathy is extended to Reich's first wife, the analyst Annie Pink, even though the marriage ended acrimoniously, and Reich himself never forgave her. I can't recall another biography where I found myself so completely at odds with the author's fundamental estimate of his subject yet so satisfied with his management of the story's particulars. I am tempted to say that Sharaf's admiration for Reich is entirely functional: it has inspired him to devote long years to the reconstruction of a life that more skeptical minds would have found unworthy of the effort, and yet, miraculously, it has not interfered with his ability to recount that life so that even non-Reichians can appreciate it.

REICH'S CAREER is best understood as the inexorable unfolding of a fantasy whose intellectual origins—unbeknownst to him—lay in the culture of the late-nineteenth century. He was, one might say, the most abject victim of European positivism—of the persuasion that the study of man and society could become a science. In the psychological realm, this entailed the belief that human behavior ultimately reflected the vicissitudes of psychic energy, which was as concrete and measurable as the energy with which physicists concerned themselves in their study of electricity. Freud, of course, had received his education in this positivist tradition, and its residues are strewn throughout psychoanalytic theory, notably in his concept of libido (or what he liked to call the "economic" perspective

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on psychic functioning). But as Freud's ideas matured, the libido theory tended to recede into the background, and he turned his attention increasingly to the verbal and symbolic manifestations of psychological life.

FROM THE START of Reich's involvement with psychoanalysis—which extended from 1918 to his expulsion from the International Psychoanalytic Association in 1934—his thought was unabashedly atavistic, a throwback to the earliest stages of the movement's evolution. Just as other analysts became ever more preoccupied with ego psychology, Reich took up Freud's economic metaphor with a vengeance. The most important results of this fascination were his theories of "character analysis" and "orgastic potency," both of which he elaborated in the 1920s.

Character analysis was the aspect of Reich's thought that the psychoanalytic community found most promising. He argued that psychic energy became "imprisoned" not merely in neurotic symptoms but also in character traits (such as exaggerated politeness), and that the analyst should address himself first and foremost to the liberation of libido from its characterological armoring. The analyst achieved this, he believed, by aggressively bringing the character trait to the patient's attention, forcing the patient to experience it as an alien and distressing mannerism. As the trait broke down, the imprisoned energy would be released, and with its release came the restoration of full genital functioning, or "orgastic potency." Orgastic potency was for Reich the sole measure of psychic health, and he argued that no neurotic patient was capable of it. As one might expect, this assertion led other analysts to counter that they knew of many neurotics who had perfectly normal sex lives. But Reich insisted that not every garden-variety orgasm qualified as evidence of orgastic potency. The authentic item had to result in "involuntary contractions of the organism and the complete discharge of the excitation"—and who was to say, in any individual case, whether this necessary "economic" goal had been attained? Like many of Reich's claims, the theory of orgastic potency did not allow of empirical verification.

In the second phase of his career, from 1926 to 1934, Reich attempted to politicize his therapeutic notions. At the intellectual level, this meant integrating the ideas of Marx and Freud. He became convinced that classical psychoanalysis had paid insufficient attention to the social bases of sexual repression. The denial of the sexual needs of children, he now argued, had created the fundamentally passive character structures that perpetuated capitalism and rendered the masses susceptible to Fascism. He thus threw himself into the political struggle, first within the left wing of the Social Democratic Party in Austria, then, after his move to Berlin in 1930, with the Communists. In both Vienna and Berlin he established "sex hygiene clinics," which aimed to provide sexual counsel and enlightenment to the poor, and he campaigned vigorously for the sexual rights of the young, in particular their right to masturbate, to indulge in heterosexual play (there were no homosexuals in Reich's universe), and to enjoy access to the contraceptive devices and the private quarters necessary to their sexual well being. Neither the Socialists nor the Communists were ready to embrace this program of sexual liberation, and Reich was booted out of both parties even before his explusion from the International Psychoanalytic Association.

IN THE LAST twenty-three years of his life—the first six of which were spent in Norway, the remainder in the United States—Reich turned from psychoanalysis and Marxism to biology. His positivist fantasy was now allowed uninhibited expression. While in Norway he conducted a series of experiments, in which electrodes were attached to sexually excited subjects, in order to demonstrate that sexual energy was simply a disguised form of electricity. (Among the many piquant revelations of Sharaf's biography is that Willy Brandt, a fellow exile in Norway, was among Reich's guinea pigs in these "bio-electric" experiments.) More laboratory work followed, and by the time he emigrated to the United States, Reich had made the momentous discovery of Orgone Energy, an energy unique to life (as well as blue in color), and to whose exploration he devoted the remainder of his days. The most notorious byproduct of his discovery was the Orgone Energy Accumulator, a box made of metal on the inside and wood on the outside, in which the patient sat in order to absorb concentrated Orgone radiation. Reich made outrageous

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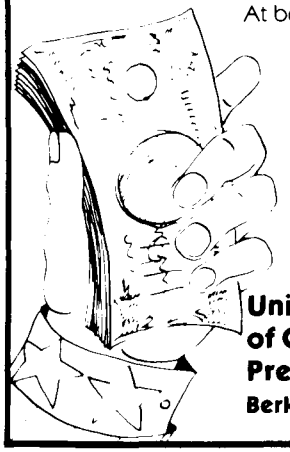

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therapeutic claims for the device, including that it could help cure cancer. One of the few liabilities of Sharaf's biography is that he takes those claims all too seriously. He registers the obligatory caveats, but he seems unable to attain the intellectual distance to recognize Reich's discovery as an absurdly literal-minded extravagance of the positivist imagination. One can agree that the F.D.A. behaved badly in its pursuit of Reich, but that should not keep us from acknowledging the essential madness of his final enterprise.

When I was a graduate student, in the 1960s, I became interested in Wilhelm Reich. I even contrived to make him one of the subjects of my doctoral dissertation. I saw him as a forerunner of such sexual radicals as Herbert Marcuse and Norman O. Brown, thinkers who appealed to me because of their efforts to transcend Freud's pessimistic conclusion, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, about the inevitable repressiveness of civilized existence. Even at the time, I felt obliged to dissociate myself from the last two decades of Reich's career, but I was prepared to tolerate his unnuanced intellectual ways as a reasonable price for his bold synthesis of Marx and Freud and his unrelenting assault on bourgeois sexual morality. In reading Myron Sharaf's biography, I found myself asking whether my feelings about Reich had changed over the nearly two decades that have elapsed since I took it upon myself to write a qualified apology for his work. Apparently they have, although I am not sure whether the change says more about me or about Reich. But I am no longer so willing to indulge Reich's crudeness, against which Freud's subtlety and complexity have held up very well. I now see him as the victim of intellectual aspirations that were already dated even before he began his mission, more a contemporary of Herbert Spencer and Mary Baker Eddy than of James Joyce, Marcel Proust, and Thomas Mann. Yet I was also charmed by Sharaf's unstinting affection for this most untimely figure. Perhaps in his devotion to Reich I recognize something of my own faded hopes.

PAUL ROBINSON

THE POLICEMAN'S LOT

The Delta Star
by Joseph Wambaugh

(Morrow, 276 pp., $15.45)

"An unlucky policeman's life passes through four stages—cockiness, care, compromise, despair." So says the character called "poor old Cal Greenberg" in *The Glitter Dome*, one of seven novels, all on police themes, by Joseph Wambaugh, the former Los Angeles detective sergeant turned best selling author. For Wambaugh, linking the words "unlucky" and "policeman" is almost a redundancy. The police officers in his novels often fall victim to alcoholism, insomnia, and broken marriages, as well as what Wambaugh calls "the ultimate cop affliction," suicide.

These afflictions are all job-related, for Wambaugh's cops are consumed by their work. Like the men and women it depicts, Wambaugh's fiction is preoccupied with the realities of police work; few novelists have examined the lives of people in any occupation as thoroughly as Wambaugh has explored the world of the police officer. For Wambaugh as for his characters, the police world encompasses more than the squad car, the precinct house, and the foot patrolman's beat. It also includes the relationships between police partners, the bureaucratic culture of the police department, the tight-knit social world of police officers and their contacts, and the families and friendships that are often torn apart by the stress of the police officer's job.

Surrounded by reminders of their work, Wambaugh's cops can't take their minds off their jobs during their waking hours, and some characters can't sleep for memories of the terrible crimes they have witnessed. The drama in Wambaugh's fiction does not focus on the solution of a crime but on the conflicts within the characters' own minds. Can an exhausted detective find the energy to pursue an investigation? Can a cop whose emotions have been deadened begin a relationship with the policewoman who is his partner? And what happens to a dedicated officer who is unfairly blamed by his department for a situation over which he had no control? These are some of the questions Wambaugh's novels explore. Despite their pains and afflictions, many of Wambaugh's cops emerge as admirable, not merely pitiable, people. Their heroism lies not simply in physical courage but also in the fortitude it takes to survive the ordeals of police work.

The hero of Wambaugh's new and disappointing novel, *The Delta Star*, appears to have wandered out of a report on the problem of occupational stress among police. A 41-year-old Los Angeles homicide detective, Mario Villalobos is a "borderline alcoholic" who likes his vodka martinis "extra-dry," without the vermouth or the olive. His hands tremble much of the time, and he is a chain-smoker. Twice divorced, Villalobos worries that his two sons are strangers to him. Lately, Villalobos has "felt exhausted . . . whether he has slept a lot or a little."

Exhausted as he is, Villalobos finds that "homicide investigation was the one thing left in the world that occasionally stimulated his few still-living neurons." Intrigued by the case of a prostitute who was pushed to her death from the roof of a cheap hotel, he eventually uncovers a bizarre scheme to influence the awarding of a Nobel prize

CORRECTION:

Two typographical errors appeared in last week's Notebook item on Moscow's campaign to tighten ideological controls. The sentences should have read: "Among them were artists, religious believers, and Jewish 'refusniks,' as well as members both of extreme Russian nationalist and socialist groups. Since Andropov's election as Party Secretary last November, the Soviet press has been engaged in a massive campaign warning the Soviet media to deal more harshly with the 'aggressive tactics of the ideological enemy.' "

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by blackmailing a member of the prize committee.

Villalobos's investigation takes him to the campus of the California Institute of Technology, where he meets a Peruvian chemist and other scientists who are as obsessed with their work as his fellow police officers. From the Peruvian, Villalobos learns the phrase "delta star," a term for the excited state of a subatomic particle. As the investigation revives the detective's depleted energies, Villalobos happily imagines that his own mind has attained the excited state of "delta star." Nor is his revival confined to his professional life; the detective also has an affair with Lupe Luna, a secretary at Cal Tech.

Villalobos drinks his martinis at a police saloon nicknamed "The House of Misery." At the bar, the cops from Villalobos's Rampart Station form a sort of Greek chorus, commenting on each day's events. Often the conversation turns to gossip about who has committed suicide and speculation about who's next. Early in the story, Villalobos and his fellow sufferers hear that "some detective from West L.A. smoked it"—that is, shot himself "right in the mouth, as usual." At the end of the novel, Villalobos and his fellow sufferers learn that another barroom regular, "the gooned-out vice cop," has also "smoked it." In addition to the two cops who "eat their guns," a Cal Tech scientist also kills himself—for a total of three suicides in *The Delta Star*. That list of self-inflicted casualties is about average for a Wambaugh novel.

For most writers, a novel like *The Delta Star* would be a descent into a nightmare world; for Wambaugh, *The Delta Star* is an optimistic vision of life. Despite the temptations and provocations around him, Villalobos stops short of self-destruction. Indeed, his is a story of self-regeneration through rediscovering the satisfactions of love and work. Many other Wambaugh heroes, denied the pleasures of an evening with Lupe Luna and the stimulation of solving a scheme to hijack a Nobel Prize, are not as lucky as Mario Villalobos. More pessimistic and more credible than *The Delta Star*, Wambaugh's earlier novels—*The Onion Field*, *The Choirboys*, and *The Glitter Dome*—tell the stories of men who are worn down by the emotional hazards of police work.

Tough but tired, driven but disillusioned, the scarred heroes of Wambaugh's novels present an image in which many readers would like to see heroic reflections of their own lives. In the Age of Burnout, there are almost mythic dimensions to the typical Wambaugh tale of a depressed and exhausted detective summoning the energy to solve one more crime before he retires. Such stories could be written about steelworkers, engineers, or computer programmers, but only Wambaugh has written them, and he has written about the people he knows best—police. The best selling appeal of Wambaugh's novels may be their exploration of the universal psychology of working life, rather than their gruesome humor or their violent episodes. After all, for readers who want their sex and violence straight, there's always the mindless blood and guts of Mickey Spillane and other cop thrillers. Yet on the paperback bookshelves, Wambaugh outsells them all.

DAVID KUSNET

David Kusnet's articles and reviews have appeared in THE NEW REPUBLIC, *The Nation*, *The Village Voice*, and *Dissent*.

BRIEF REVIEWS

Israeli Nuclear Deterrence by Shai Feldman

(Columbia University Press, 310 pp., $25, $9.95 paper)

This is a perverse book. It is written practically in praise of nuclear weapons. "The central conclusion of this essay," writes the author, a defense analyst at Tel Aviv University, "is that to maximize the odds of security and peace Israel must adopt a doctrine of explicit strategic nuclear deterrence." Nuclear deterrence, after all, has provided a peace between the superpowers, and their good fortune may be repeated for lesser powers, too. For this reason Israel must say that it has the bombs if it has them, and say, too, that it will use them against an Arab attack. Feldman undertakes a systematic review of the many benefits of nuclear deterrence. And he is not dissuaded by the prospect of an Arab bomb. Quite the contrary. Since deterrence requires a stalemate—what is known as a mutual hostage relationship—the acquisition of a nuclear capability by Israel's enemies is rather to be desired. It would bring into being "a system of mutual nuclear deterrence" in a "multinuclear Middle East." "Assuming for a moment that nuclear deterrence could be perfectly conducted and perfectly verified," Feldman asks, "would the citizens of the United States prefer the hazards and uncertainties of the nuclear era?"

Yes, yes, a thousand times yes. The nuclear age is a strange time to forget about the imperfection of human arrangements. Feldman's assumption cannot be made. Nuclear deterrence between the superpowers has not been perfectly conducted or perfectly verified; it has been only a stopgap measure that so far has worked. One day it may fail. Despite his many admissions that

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his strategy is riddled with risk, Feldman must be reminded of it. He must also be reminded that he is proposing to introduce the most lethal instruments of destruction into the very region of the world that has been most immune to reason.

Yet it is not merely for his varnish of the Middle East that Feldman's proposal must be faulted. It is a perfect illustration of a certain school of liberal cleverness about nuclear weapons. This school is best represented by Kenneth Waltz, a political scientist at Berkeley and Feldman's mentor, who authored a well-known paper called "The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better." The title tells all. The paper includes a sentence, however, that takes you to the slough of strategic despond, and nicely captures the conception of Feldman's book: "Nuclear weapons make it possible to approach the deterrent ideal." Plainly this is backwards. Deterrence makes it possible to approach the nuclear real. These thinkers show how delicate the defense of deterrence must be. Excessive praise is as dangerous as excessive blame. Your abhorrence of nuclear weapons must not lead you to abhor deterrence, but your admiration of deterrence must not lead you to admire nuclear weapons. They are here to stay, it is true. Yet the security they furnish pales before the security they don't.

L.W.

No Place on Earth by Christa Wolf

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 130 pp., $11.95)

In *No Place on Earth*, Christa Wolf imagines the meeting of two young nineteenth-century German writers—the dramatist Heinrich von Kleist and the poetess Karoline von Günderrode—at a literary tea party one afternoon in June 1804. "The claim that they met," writes Wolf in the book's opening lines, is "a legend that suits us," one which will provide the structure for the creation of this ephemeral and fictional moment. In their mysterious encounter, which seems to both writers to be, like Kleist's description of its Rhineland setting, "a sort of poet's dream," they share a utopian vision of their artistic potential. Children of impoverished nobility, the 27-year-old Kleist and the 24-year-old Günderrode are prototypical Romantics: Kleist, having broken with the distinguished military tradition of his Prussian family and failed in a civil service post, now "sketches with his eccentric footprints the lacerated map of Europe"; Günderrode from adolescence has lived in isolated anguish at a convent for unmarried gentlewomen. United in their estrangement from society, the two stand apart, watching the rest of the party and commenting upon both it and their own despair in an elliptic dialogue. "Happiness is the place where I am not," says Kleist, and Günderrode predicts she will soon "give birth to what slays me." Both sense that this meeting will be their only one; when the afternoon—and the novel—ends, they must re-enter history. Two years after the hour of their fictional encounter, Günderrode will stab herself to death with a silver dagger; six years later, Kleist too will commit suicide.

LIKE MOST of Wolf's earlier fiction—*Divided Heaven* (1963), the widely acclaimed *Quest For Christa T.* (1968), and *A Model Childhood* (1977)—*No Place On Earth* is about people trying to reconcile themselves to the difficult worlds they live in. A prominent East German novelist and critic, a feminist and a Socialist, Wolf has spent the more than twenty years of her career tracing her past and the past of Nazi and postwar Germany. One in a wave of German artists—notably authors Peter Handke and Siegfried Lenz, and filmmakers Margarethe Von Trotta, Volker Schlöndorff, and Rainer Fassbinder—who have earned deserved popularity in an America recently preoccupied with the meanings of guilt, Wolf makes meticulous use of the most quotidian detail to show the links between the personal and the political.

For Wolf, as for Handke, memory is key; an "unused memory gets lost, ceases to exist, dissolves into nothing—an alarming thought," she writes in *A Model Childhood*, a novel about growing up under Hitler. Until *No Place On Earth*, her novels have been unashamedly autobiographical. After 1976, however, when the East German government tightened its surveillance of writers and expelled authors Wolf Biermann and Reiner Kunze, among others, Wolf shifted to literary-historical studies, editing the work of Karoline von Günderrode and Günderrode's friend and fellow writer, Bettine Bretano von Arnim. While less overtly controversial than her writing about her own era, *No Place On Earth*, which presumably stems from Wolf's critical efforts, does speak to current East German social and political issues. In making the obscure Günderrode her subject and implying, as Wolf does, that she might have been the precursor to the modern woman artist, Wolf is questioning and seeking to alter the German cannon. From behind the protective veil of "history," Wolf criticizes contemporary East Germany. When "Kleist has a vision of an age founded on empty talk rather than actions," his vision calls to both German and American minds the restrictions on thought imposed in the German Democratic Republic today.

WOLF concentrates so hard, though, on forging and sustaining a transcendent and allegorical moment that she omits the kind of particulars that make her other novels live. Without its appendix of translator's notes, which explain Günderrode's and Kleist's histories and futures, *No Place On Earth* would be incomprehensible to all but the most inveterate scholars of German Romanticism. Even with the notes, the novel is too often vague and tiresomely paradoxical. Although such obscurity is, clearly, intentional—Wolf writes of the "wicked spoor left in time's wake as it flees us"—it renders the book frustratingly impenetrable. Kleist with his ironic "forced laughter" and his dicta ("We are not worthy of that which we long for") and Günderrode with her silver dagger come dangerously close to the ridiculous. Wolf's earlier novels have had a kind of universal appeal: to foreigners and Germans alike, they convey the moods of East Germany. *No Place On Earth*, although interesting as an exercise in probing national memory, is by contrast unexpectedly and disappointingly provincial.

AMITY SHLAES

Amity Shlaes, a former TNR reporter-researcher, is studying in West Berlin on a German Academic Exchange Service Fellowship.

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TRB, *from page 6*

available for 40 years."

Dr. Milton Eisenhower (Ike's brother), who headed one commission, had a typical reaction. I was on a TV panel that interrogated him, and later he wrote a book, *The President is Calling*. His commission unanimously recommended a ban on the manufacture, importation, and distribution of handguns. In his book he says, "Every civilized nation in the world other than our own has comprehensive national policies of gun control."

Now President Reagan revives the subject. It's an ever-popular theme to attack crime and avoid attacking one crucial thing in American life that distinguishes it from other industrialized countries. Chief Justice Warren Burger addressed the American Bar Association on February 8, 1981. "Crime and fear of crime," he said, "have permeated the fabric of American life. Like it or not, we are approaching the status of an impotent society, whose capability of maintaining elementary security of the streets, in schools, and for the homes of the people is in doubt."

That from the Chief Justice. The National Rifle Association will get after him if he doesn't watch out. President Reagan will say eloquent things about it, but he won't lead an evangelical crusade against the 60 million concealable handguns now believed to be circulating in America. A couple million more are believed added each year.

After Burger made his startling speech, *Time* and *Newsweek* reacted with embarrassingly similar stories. If you bought *Newsweek* on March 16, 1981, you faced an ugly five-caliber handgun aimed at you. The cover headline: THE EPIDEMIC OF VIOLENT CRIME. If you bought *Time* the same week, you confronted an even scarier picture, a masked mannikin with snub-nosed gun. *Time's* cover headline read: THE CURSE OF VIOLENT CRIME. Now it's 1983, and judging by murder statistics, crime may be rediscovered again. Handguns remain available. The weeklies don't tell us anything we don't already know. Crime "warps U.S. life," *Newsweek* explained, without taking sides. *Time* noted that the public wants gun control but Congress won't vote for it. Until it does, it added, America will have to live with "one of the world's worst murder records." Quite so.

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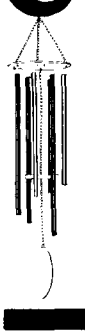

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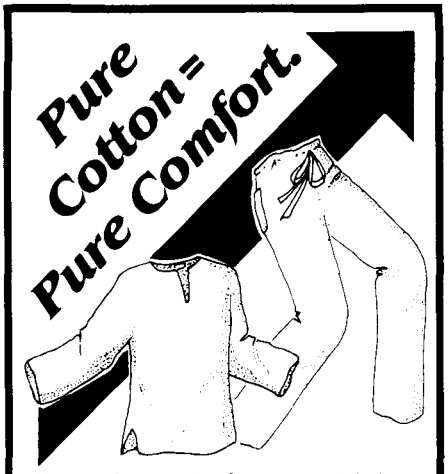

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Wounds

"THE WOUND IN THE HEART": that was Spain according to Camus. With genuine fervor, as I remember it, I sang songs of the Spanish Civil War, and joined in with that throaty old Folkways recording that has serviced the illusions of two or three generations, about the struggle of democracy's martyrs at Brunete and Ero River, on the Aragon front and in the Jarama Valley, against "the four insurgent generals" (Franco the first among them) and their Fascist legions. Well, now the Spanish wound is healed. A charismatic Socialist, Felipe González, governs the country with a solid majority in the Cortez. (In neighboring Portugal, similarly freed in recent years from Fascist rule, Socialist Mario Soares, the most morally serious democrat in Europe, awaits an electoral mandate for return to power.) I find myself thinking a heretical thought. What would have been the fate of the Iberian peninsula if in 1939 the Republic, rather than Franco, had triumphed? For by then power in the Republic—aside from some Socialist fig leaves—was neither more nor less than that of the Communists, the brutalizers whom Orwell told the world about in *Homage to Catalonia*. Would democratic socialists now be freely elected in Madrid (and in Lisbon) had *La Passionria* come to power and not *El Caudillo*? Would workers be able to strike and to organize had their self-designated tribunes (the tribunes of the laws of history, too), the heroes of the songs I sang, won the day? Think now of the Soviet Union and East Germany and Poland, and you'll have some sense of why I feel more than just a bit queasy recalling my off-key but lusty rendition of "Die Thälmann-Kolonneau," knowing now, as I didn't then, that the battalion of the song's title was named after Ernst Thälmann, a cruel German Communist stupidly loyal to Stalin; knowing also that many of those who fought under its banners were killed not across the trenches by Franco's men, but up close for political reasons by men they called comrades. Nor is that all. As Hugh Trevor-Roper has observed, a left-wing government in Spain would almost certainly have tempted Hitler to cross the Pyrenees and control Gibraltar, thereby crushing not only democracy in Spain but also the Allies' chances of winning the war.

BACK TO AN OBSESSIVE wound in my heart: media coverage of the Middle East. Maybe it doesn't matter what *U.S News & World Report* prints. Who reads it, anyway? Not many people you and I know. Two million people buy it, however, and this is what they saw in an article on the West Bank in the issue of September 13, 1982. Two photographs dominate the top of a page. One is of an Arab, kaffiyeh-topped and staff in hand, guiding a camel across a desolate landscape. The caption says, "Life is hard on the West Bank, where some farmers use camels to till arid fields." (Never mind that since 1967 West Bank agriculture has been the most advanced in the Arab world). The adjoining picture is of Hassidic boys—earlocks, long black coats, skullcaps—absorbed in the Pac-Man culture, just like your kids, or at least mine. The caption: "Israeli youngsters, part of 24,000 settlers on occupied land, play latest video games." A stock theme from the (T.E.) Lawrentian morality play of Middle East history: the conflict between native and alien, ancient and modern, primitive and corrupt, noble and decadent. Except that Rabbi Shimon Paskow of Thousand Oaks, California, was suspicious of the second photograph and immediately wrote to *U.S. News* asking "when and where the picture was taken." A week later executive editor Ben F. Phlegar wrote back saying that the photo "is not ours," and suggested that inquiry be made at Sygma Photo News in New York. The magazine appreciated the rabbi's interest but wasn't interested itself. Paskow wrote to Sygma on November 10, and, not receiving a reply, again on January 14, this time adding that he presumed the published photograph and caption to be "a fake." That, alas, is precisely what it was. Sygma confirmed in writing that the "photo was indeed miscaptioned. . . . You are correct in stating that the photo was not taken on the West Bank . . . [but] at a Tel Aviv convention in October 1979." Different locales and one roll of film, they explained. "We regret the error and present our excuses to yourself and your congregation." Maybe that will suffice for those who worship at Temple Etz Chaim of Thousand Oaks. But what about the readers of *U.S. News?* It's too late to try to correct the lie printed seven months ago. (Presumably it's also too late for *Newsweek* now to admit that the "firestorm" in Beirut it described and "photographed" last August 16 was a fabrication.) It is something of a nadir in American journalism when readers can't trust even the photographs they see.

YOU DON'T have to take my judgment on Yo Yo Ma. Isaac Stern says of this young cellist that he is one of the greatest living instrumentalists. I've heard him play twice in recent weeks, once the Dvorak Cello Concerto with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Ozawa, the second time in a recital at Harvard in a program of Bach, Mozart, and Ravel, with violinist Lynn Chang. The apparently effortless movements of his hands and the far-away intensity of his face make for the picture of genius. In music genius doesn't intimidate; it heals and redeems. At least Yo Yo Ma's does. A large number in both audiences were young Chinese Americans. I walked by the Julliard School in New York a few weeks ago, and my eyes told me that a disproportionate number of the students going in and out were Orientals mastering the art of an alien tradition, not because of some affirmative action program, but because of proven talent. No one has ever adequately explained this phenomenon of cross-cultural adaptability to me. I'm persuaded it has much to do with what used to be called "national character." National character is what really interested Montesquieu, and it's what animates much of the discipline of anthropology. But liberals are afraid of the phrase, lest the recognition of some intrinsic national talent validate the notion of some intrinsic national infirmity. But if we can't face the reality of different group characters around us, we are denying one of the most palpable facts of our collective lives.

M.P.

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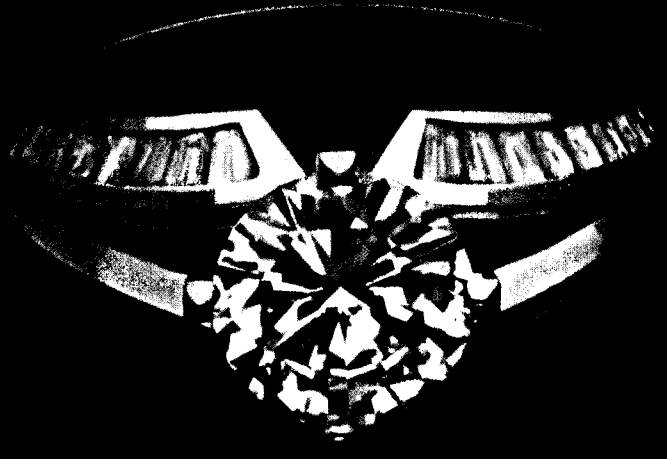

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